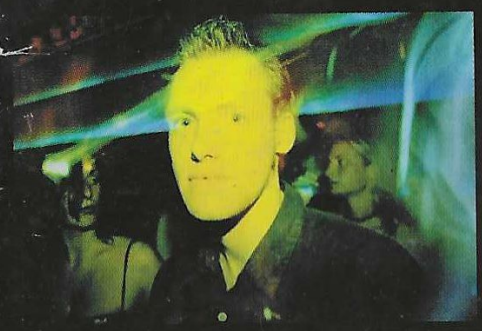
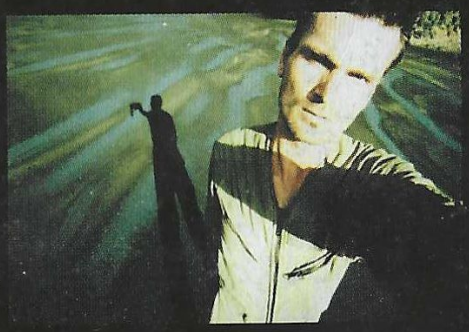
overload

ELECTRONIC MUSIC + WIRED CULTURE





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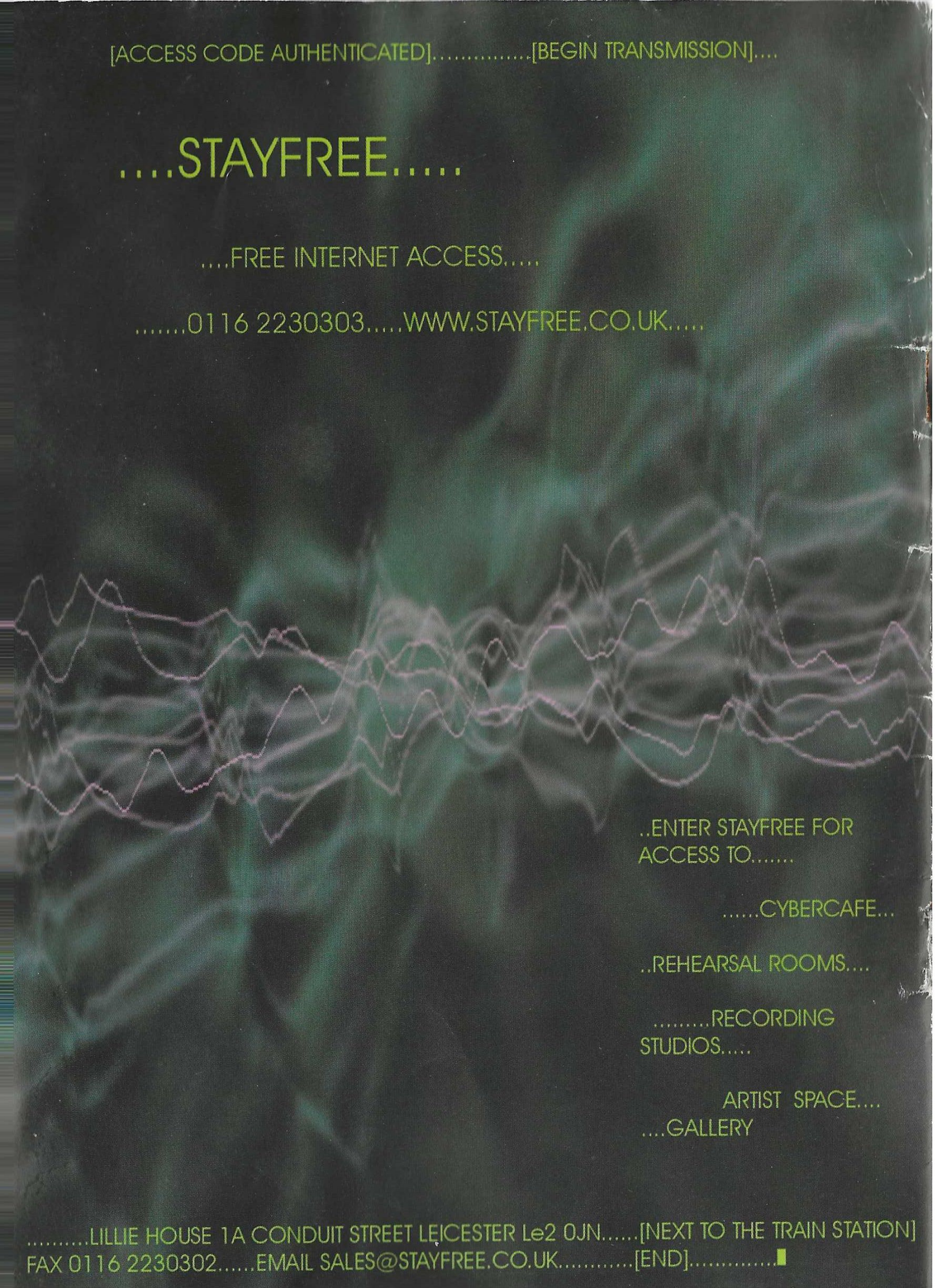

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EDITORIAL

VERSION 1.0: MARCH 2000

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>END MESSAGE

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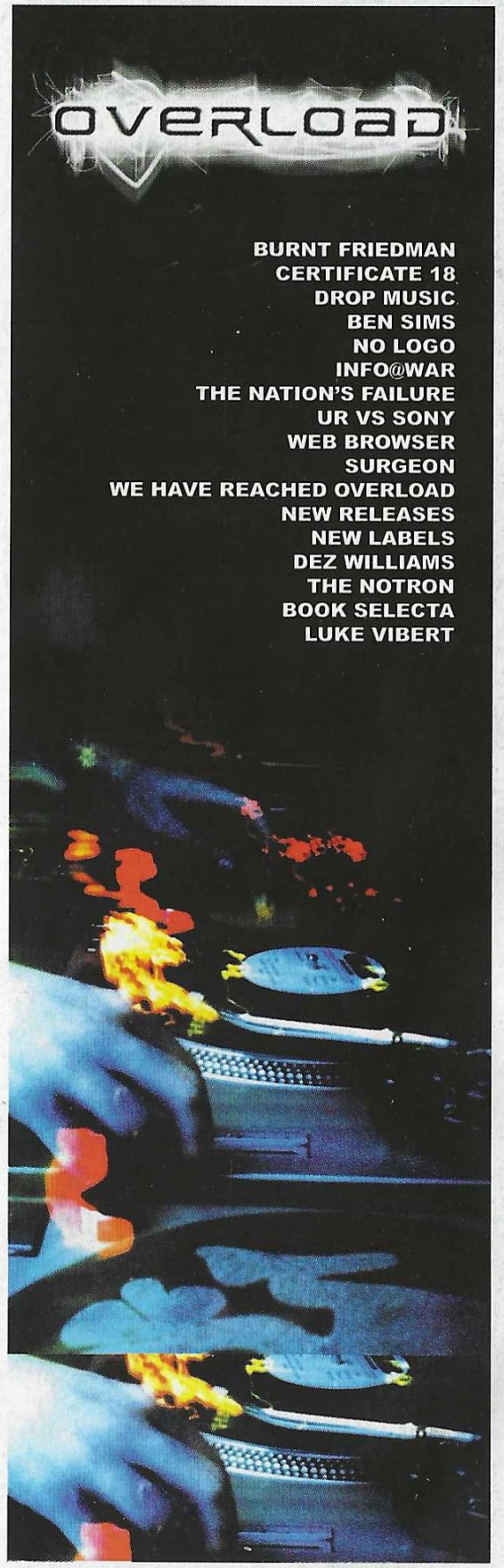

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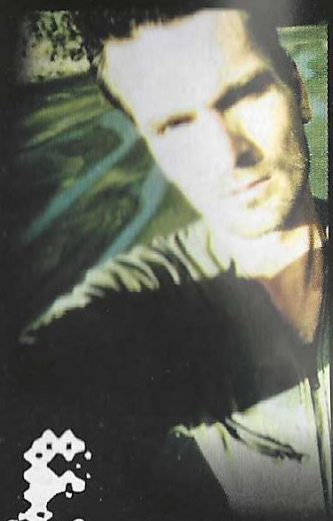
>Disclaimer: The views expressed in Overload Magazine are not necessarily those held by the editors or staff. So please don't start.

Making waves with rimshot rattling and gargantuan bass, Cologne resident Burnt Friedman (aka Bernd Friedmann) is shaking up dubwise sensi-bilities with a skanking new album recorded at a secret sonic hideaway off the New Zealand coast. Lay down your skins and turn up your receptors as dub receives its first proper overhaul in over twenty years.



IN A NU DUB STYLE

I have this theory that musician's speech patterns often reflect the nature of their music. It's just a theory of course, but Autechre speak in tandem, and in tangents, Plaid are in turn unassuming, effervescent, and mysterious, and Burnt Friedman is kind of odd, managing to give the idea of very considered responses, whilst at the same time having his head in several different places. Even though we speak over the phone, I can still sense the wry smile of a man who, although having just released a great contemporary dub album, a very considered response to the inspirational work of 70's dub warriors whose work has remained unmatched for decades, still thinks what he does, and what surrounds it, is always ever so slightly amusing.

The Nu Dub Players, that Burnt worked with on this great album, 'Just Landed', are described to me as such: 'Crucial Guenther' - brain surgeon of boom and bass bandito from Berlin, 'DJ Booth' - and his phenomenal home made effects in a suitcase rig, 'Bernie The Bolt' - the Golden Shot of drum-s'n'perc and finally 'Cousin Of The Sausage Smearer' - gat twanger and meat meister extraordinaire.

Burnt has, for a good few years now, been probing away at the boundaries of experimental electronic music, under various guises, the better known of which are Drome, Nonplace Urban Field, and last year's mighty Flanger collaboration with Atom Heart, the results of which were released on N Tone. 'Just Landed' has found it's spiritual home in Scape Records, the baby of Stefan Betke's minimally boombastic Pole, and a right-eous place for one of the best modern interpretations of the great dub tradition in recent years. Managing to suspend my disbelief that the Nu Dub Players actually exist, a theory that you will understand given the above descriptions, I simply ask Burnt how they met up and how it all worked...

"We all met in New Zealand over the last three years. The second time I went out there, I had taken some rough media of songs, and I was looking for players to interpret the midi files in their own way. I gathered different tracks that we made on top of those rough arrangements. They didn't work like songs in a traditional sense, because I wanted to do more hard disk edits and arrangements afterwards, and I didn't just want to record jams. Even though I rearranged the recordings, using maybe one of ten takes, I think the flow that goes with the music, and the humour even, of having people in the studio spontaneously playing instruments, was very important, whereas with the usual sequenced music - most of the music I have recorded before this has been sequenced music - it is hard to achieve that flow, and the sequenced thing can't keep up with the tempo of the ideas that come up with live players."

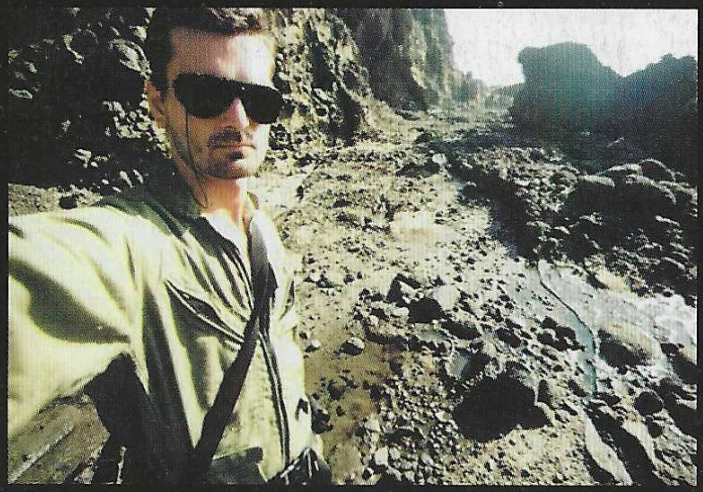
Consciously setting out to make a dub record in the tradition of the genre, whilst at the same time attempting to expand its boundaries, Burnt has truly captured the spirit of the past in order to inform it's future. Like hip hop, dub will always take a nod to it's past, and work within the traditions, the skills, and techniques that make it what it is, and in the same way, it's how those traditions are interpreted and mutated by pioneers like Burnt that maintain the style as a valid creative form. "I was so excited by the 70's reggae productions, because on the one hand, the precise contribution of the rhythm section, but at the same time the hi tech work of a remixer, it was like the best marriage. There are the two opposite sides of what music is, the acoustic side because of the true value of music, whereas electronic music has the notion of being bloodless, repetitive sound experiments. With dub reggae they didn't care about those opposites at all because they succeeded in mixing those elements together in perfect harmony. When I set out to make the album, I was very aware that with sequenced music, it wouldn't be achievable."

Checking in at a minimal thirty six minutes, 'Just Landed's' size belies it's length, and, as the saying goes, girth brings mirth. The album took three years to record with over twenty compositions written, and unbelievably, people have questioned Burnt over the short length of the record, like it mattered. 'Just Landed' inhabits it's own time zone, where minutes and seconds cease to exist, let alone matter, where great walls of bass echo like their influences, the percussive spontaneity moulded into roughshod skank rhythms by Burnt's subtle programming, edits, and always entertaining electronic randomness. It has the solid power of African Headcharge with creative joy of Lee Perry at his most willful. I ask Burnt why dub still holds works of over thirty years ago as it's standards. "I think dub as a working method has found friends in all genres, in terms of sound concerned working methods, but I think dub as a style hasn't made that much progress. The early work of African Headcharge and Dub Syndicate, or On U Sound really excited me, but there have been lots of records that didn't strike me - you had to look at 70's records by The Scientist, and still there are no equivalents"

As we speak Burnt is preparing for another stint in New Zealand, getting together his traveling studio kit, and I wonder how his different working environments affect the music he makes. His Nonplace Urban Field material, entailing a more electronic groove, would largely have been written in Cologne, whilst the bizarre experiments of Flanger material was recorded at Atom Heart's house in Chile. I mention to Burnt a vague recollection of an article on Lee Perry where someone recalled the importance of his studio environment as essential in creating his

sound. "Yes, these different environments are very helpful for my work, absolutely. I'm not taking myself too seriously anymore, and in foreign countries you always have to start from scratch. You know nobody knows you, and you create a new human being. Everything concerning your personality is reset again, and can be brought up another way. All the hypes and media mutterings, for example, are so very far away and you don't matter that much in New Zealand. In Chile, people don't really care that much about world media, and this makes it quite healthy. I didn't know that this would happen when I started going to these places, but it has been very important in my working because before this I hadn't really left the studio that much."

Burnt's enterprises are probably set to keep him out of the studio a bit more as well, with the setting up of his own label, Non Place, of which Burnt states 'everything is possible'. With another Flanger album just mastered ready for release, again on N Tone, in July, and a Latin jazz inspired Non Place album sometime this year, Burnt also hopes to put out a long finished Non Place LP that was originally scheduled for release on Sweden's Dot label before they experienced some difficulties. "That is the Non Place album that should have come out some time ago", he mentions, "I may call it 'Fucking Long Time'". There's that wry smile again.



WORDS> STEVE NICHOLS

'Just Landed' by Bernt Friedman & The Nu Dub Players' is out now on Scape, 'Nonplace EP 1' by Bernd Friedmann & Atom Heart is due out on 10th April on Nonplace.

CERTIFIED SOUNDWAVES

WORDS> SZA

You don't need to be a clued up to the eyeballs junglist to realise the extent of Certificate 18's influence in the evolution of drum and bass - the label that introduced the world to the leading edge sounds of breakbeat pioneers Photek, Digital and Source Direct. The brains and, most importantly, ears of Certificate 18, Paul Arnold, is one of the scene's lesser-known movers and shakers, responsible for kick-starting the careers of some of the most innovative breakbeat producers in the world. "Its quite nice when you think of it like that" says the ever modest label boss, "buts it's not about that, it's just about putting out good music." So it should come as no surprise, on the cusp of the label's latest release 'DJ Teebee presents Black Science Labs', that there are rumblings in the drum and bass community. Certificate 18's take on drum and bass is not your usual predictable floor fodder. "I think our sound is coming around at the moment" explains Paul, "Teebee's album is perfectly timed."

From humble beginnings working behind the counter on Ipswich's record shop circuit, Paul was fortunate enough to be amongst the first to hear demos of rookie producers who lived in the area. "Hardcore was just kicking off, and some of the demos coming into the shop were so new and exciting - completely different to anything else. Rupert [Photek] was one of them. He was playing me stuff that just completely blew me away." So, does Paul still find time to DJ and promote? "Yes, 'Chew The Fat' runs every Friday at the Bug Bar in Brixton and 'Six Foot Stereo' the first Saturday of every month at 333 club in Brixton. Six Foot Stereo is complete mayhem. We have a compere, people bring their own records down, we pick a number out of a hat at random and whoever's number gets pulled out gets to come and play five of their own records. It's absolute madness - a real good laugh - a total spin back to the whole thing I do anyway. It's sticking two fingers up to it all in a way". A kind of response to the celebrity DJs that dominate the dance music scene then? "In a way. Its hard for DJ s to break through, its all pretty tied up. Everyone likes music, everyone likes to play records. This is democracy to the decks. Why shouldn't everyone have the chance to play what they want in five?"

Innovation has been the central theme in sculpting Certificate 18's sound since day one. Maintaining a firm belief in the music they feel deserves to be released, they have carved a clear-cut space in the claustrophobic record label arena. C18's 12"s were often backed by b-side experimental re-workings from the likes of Autechre, Plaid and Kirk De Georgio. The success of these skewed left-field remixes spawned a new off shoot label: Certificate 18 Electronic Projects. Pilote's debut on this C18 off shoot showcases some of the most emotional electronic music this side of classic Black Dog, Plaid and early Luke Vibert productions, with truly engaging organic beat construction and other-worldly melodies. One of the best tracks on the album is scheduled for a 7" release along with a new track later this year. Those who fix a true focus on finding 'future' music should take heed of C18 release schedule for 2000: Polar, Pilotte and Tee Bee all have debut albums coming up on C18 this year, plus Hi-Ryze - previously known for output on GPR will also be providing material for electronic projects. Seek and ye shall most definitely find.

'DJ Teebee Presents Black Science Labs' is due for release on Certificate 18 on 27th March, 'Antenna' by Pilote is out now on Certificate 18 / Electronic Projects.

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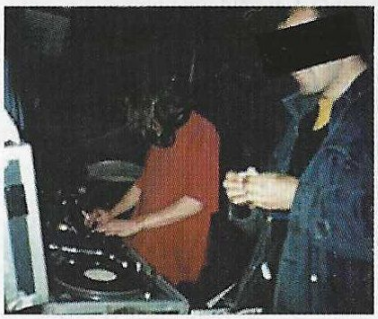
DROPPED ON THEIR FEET

Far away from the fenced-in freak-show at Glastonbury '99, the traveller's field offered an utterly absurd social cocktail. Between the trucks, dogs and ceaseless sound rigs, one displaced club floozie could clearly be overheard sprouting her opinion that free party music is little more than 'the soundtrack to scrumpy-induced oblivion'. Had she bothered to walk up to the crisp Nottinghamshire deep house sound system at the top of the field, she might have learned a thing or two about false preconceptions.

"A lot of people refer to house music as more 'commercial' than 'free party', but from my experience that's bollocks..." remarks Laurence Richie, one of the founder members of free-party figureheads Smokescreen. Given their formidable reputation on the UK sound system circuit following eight years of pumping out some of the deepest and dubbiest house music on the planet, it would be foolish to try and argue the point further. But unlike East-Midlands cohorts DiY, whose infamous illicit activities and subsequent successful label endeavours have gained the collective considerable press attention, Smokescreen still remain largely eclipsed from the limelight. Yet the 'funky-dub-house' sound they have crafted at parties over nearly a decade is now permeating all four-corners of the globe due to their Nottingham-based vinyl imprint, Drop Music. "We have influenced ourselves" states Laurence, "through a lot of record-buying over the years, through a lot of partying with other rigs, and through seeing how crowds react to different grooves."

Since late '98 recognition for Drop tracks has been snowballing. South Africa and San Francisco have picked up massively on the label, and promo returns from France, Australia and New Zealand have affirmed Drop's position as purveyors of top track-head fodder. "There's a large black scene in South Africa where they play it at minus seven" explains Laurence, a little bemused. "They've got a weird scene out there where they play house music at the wrong speed - really slow..." With Drop Music's slick production sheen, it's unsurprising that many mainstream house DJs have also tuned in to their free party-rooted vibe. Laurent Garnier, Ashley Beadle and Graeme Park have all advocated Drop's dance-floor effectiveness, whilst even more techno-orientated DJs like Mr C, Colin Dale and Nathan Coles have been seduced by the label's powerful dubby bass-lines and sharp funked-up percussion. "I don't like to say 'tech-house', but there is a techno element to Drop Music", says Laurence, helping define the label's cross-over appeal. He admits the two styles of music are coming closer together, yet still draws a dividing line when I ask him if he 'likes' techno. "There was one point where I thought 'aggressive music, aggressive nature', the attitude seemed a bit heavy. I recall one party we did on a traveller's site with a techno system - we got told to fuck off and take our handbags with us! I've been to quite a lot of techno parties now, and had a bit of a dance - I really enjoy the atmosphere. Everyone now is shouting about 'funky techno'. I don't know if it's the techno that's got funky or the people..."



As well as forging a unique sound for the label, their free party foundations have also provided a historical perspective that so many new imprints lack. It was back in '92 when Smokescreen first began partying in woods outside Sheffield. What started out as a familiar 'mates having a laugh' scenario soon caught on, with revellers from Nottingham, Leicester, Derby and Manchester making a regular pilgrimage to Smokies' weekend gatherings. By the time of their fifth birthday party the collective had relocated to Nottingham, taking their almost legendary hand-built sound PA with them. "We moved down from Sheffield because we couldn't run it from there anymore. The PA sounded brilliant, and it belonged to no one, that was the beautiful thing - it belonged to Smokescreen." He describes it as being 'the ultimate perfect collective scenario'.

"Everyone now is shouting about 'funky techno'. I don't know if it's the techno that's got funky or the people..."

Not quite fairy tale stuff though, as Smokescreen's PA finally fell foul to the draconian powers of the Criminal Justice Bill. Their rig is still impounded following its seizure at a party last year, and they're not getting it back. In fact, it's highly likely there's going to be a destruction order. Doing gigs at the Future Club in Derby had bought in money that they had invested in digital amps, compressors and new drivers in all the bins. "It was one of the best sounding rigs on the circuit" Laurence sighs. "We never used to do a Smokescreen [club] night unless we could take the rig into the club. We have no choice now." Their sound quality may have been compromised by tyrannical law-enforcement, yet their regular nights at the Future are still always rammed, always rocking. "The connection between us and that club is timeless", he adds.

So, given that free party ethics are so far removed from the industry's corporate infrastructure, surely Laurence would have a few words to say about the contemporary cult of the celebrity DJ. "To me it's junk music, it's junk DJs" he rants. "It's like the McDonalds of house. It's fast food, it's convenient, you swallow it, shit it out and it's gone with. It's everywhere, on the radio, in the magazines. Kids growing up just get it fed to them on a plate. They don't know anything else, unless you introduce them to it or they're involved with any scene or circle. It's cheap, it's accessible, it's crap." Well, that's told us then.

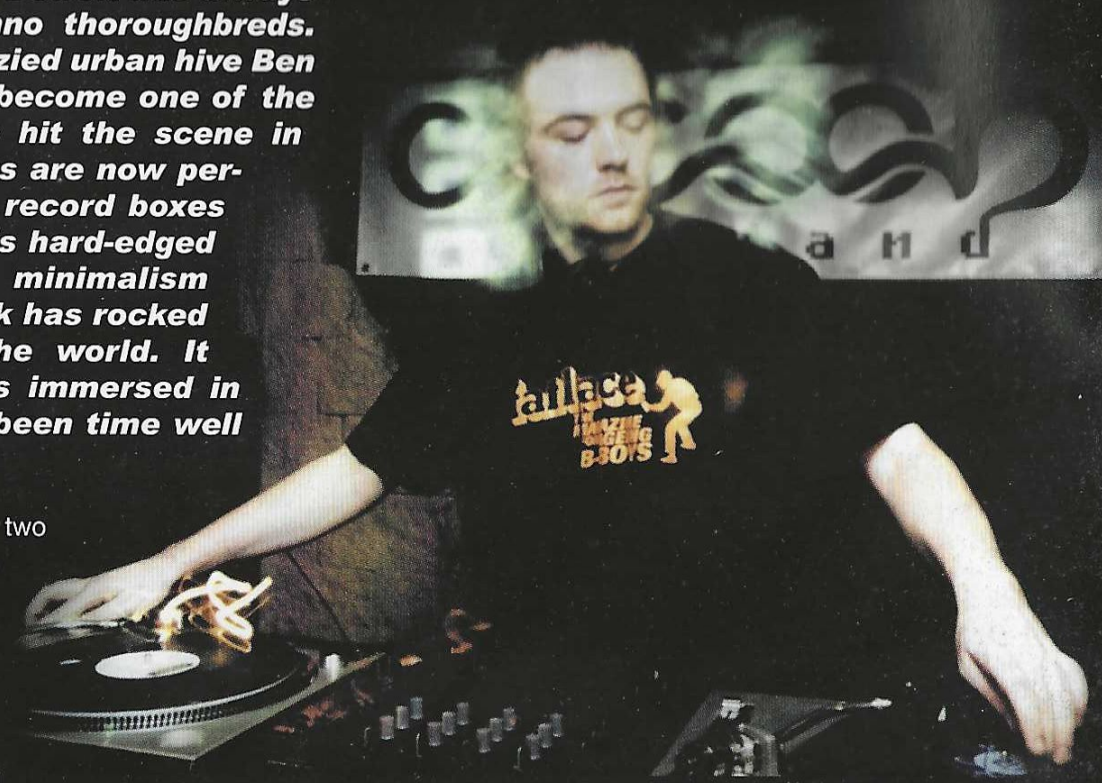
Drop Music 001	Inland Knights Vol. 1	Inland Knights (Laurence Richie / Andy Riley)
Drop Music 002	In-house Alterations	Laurence / Andy / Jason Cowley
Drop Music 003	New Century Swings	Inland Knights (Laurence / Andy)
Drop Music 004	Genetic Grooves	Laurence / Andy / Jason
Drop Music 005	Put It Back	Inland Knights (Laurence / Andy)
Drop Music 006	Party Criminals	Laurence Richie / Andy Riley / Alex Dean
Drop Music 007	Turn On Tune In	To-ka Project (Laurence / Andy / Jason / Steve Walker)
Drop Music 008	Sound Extensions	Inland Knights (Laurence / Andy)
Drop Music 009	Filter Interference	Laurence
20/20 Vision	Fresh Connections	Inland Knights (Laurence / Andy)
Earth Records	To-ka.Project	To-ka Project (Laurence / Andy / Jason / Steve)
Pan Handle	Crazy	Inland Knights (Laurence / Andy)

WORDS> THERESA GREEN

Another 20/20 Vision release is lined up, together with Drop Music 10 'Audio Spider Mite' (by Laurence, Andy and Steve) and a mix on DIY's forthcoming album.

KILLER GROOVE THEORY

London, like Berlin and Detroit has always been a home for techno thoroughbreds. Emerging from the frenzied urban hive Ben Sims has undoubtedly become one of the hottest new names to hit the scene in recent years. His tracks are now permanent fixtures in the record boxes of thousands, whilst his hard-edged hybrid of percussive minimalism and cut-up technophunk has rocked dance-floors around the world. It looks like fifteen years immersed in music and mixing has been time well spent.



Ben Sims knows a thing or two about groove dynamics. "I've always listened to groove or funk based music, and I would hope my own productions reflect that" he remarks. With Ben's tracks being hammered by just about everyone from Jeff Mills to Carl Cox there's little doubt that his sound is very DJ friendly and dance-floor effective. Despite acknowledging the broad appeal of his music, Ben is quick to play down the chic producer image. "I'm first a DJ, then a producer" he explains, "what I'm making is just for me to play with." After waiting patiently for both his music and confidence to develop, Ben's first release (Theory 001) paved the way for a whole new school of floor-friendly funk-based rhythms. Because Nineties media has ultra-fashioned the producing perspective, Ben's attitude represents a refreshing antipode to the wannabe-a-pop-star approach of the many enthusiastic DJs who sprint to the cutting room with their first half-baked DAT recordings. "When I first began buying equipment it wasn't to start making records, it was to experiment making music."

Anyone who has witnessed one of his ultra-focused DJ sets will realise that Ben's passion for music is more firmly rooted behind the decks than the desk. "I only produce in phases and enjoy that. I haven't made music for two months so I'm really excited about doing some tracks, but in general I enjoy DJing more... It's me, it's what I've always done since I was old enough to think for myself." Since cutting his turntable teeth with hip hop beats at the age of ten, his DJing has developed into a precise compound of rhythm, texture and groove. He defines his style as "part hip hop, part house, part everything he's always been into'. When I first started playing hip hop, I was mainly cutting-up records and mixing rap with soul - it was quite jerky. Hip hop is a lot about power mixing - dropping records with impact. When I started experimenting with early house / techno it was much more about beat mixing and finding records that perfectly complimented each other. I try to find the perfect balance between the two. I've been into the art of mixing music for over fifteen years now and I'm still very influenced by some amazing DJ sets I've heard over the years. DJs like Jah Shaka or Francois Kervorkian or DJ Cheese or Froggy have been as important to me as people like Derrick May etc."

A key figure in the establishment of London's 'Atmosphere FM' (a pirate station that ran from 1991 - 1995), Ben took his skills to the clubs when the authorities began sanitising the airwaves and subsequently built up a solid reputation on the London circuit. Given the time he's spent (or rather invested) playing and listening to such a broad range of music, it's not surprising that Ben has crafted his own unique sound by extracting the nectar from his many influences. By his own admission, most of his tracks are made for his own DJing use, claiming he wouldn't consider releasing anything he won't spin or dance to himself. But in this current climate of bonus beats and locked-grooves, can he draw a dividing line between what classifies as a 'track' and a 'tool'? "All records are DJ tools if you are a DJ, the point I try and make is that my music is meant for manipulation" he replies wisely. Hearing some of his favourite DJs from the last decade 'manipulate' his music has certainly helped Ben's confidence as a producer. Although he may lack the credentials of Mills and Hawtin, their heavy usage of his tracks (such as on Hawtin's Decks, EFX & 909 mix album) clearly underwrites the direction his music has taken.

"DJs like Jah Shaka or Francois Kervorkian or DJ Cheese or Froggy have been as important to me as people like Derrick May etc."

He finds it bizarre that the tracks to give him the most widespread recognition were actually the quickest projects to complete. The two 'Killa Bite' EPs were never really intended for release, but nonetheless were incredibly successful on both sides of the house / techno fence. "It was April 1998 when the first Killa Bite track came out, and I'm still doing interviews about it now." Although the tracks were no

more than powerful cut-ups of warehouse classics, they certainly broke him into new ground with his DJing. The past two years have seen him constantly jet-setting off to major events and clubs from Japan to the States - he's only just returned from a triumphant tour of Australia. "I wish I could play in the UK more often" he comments, "the scene here is still pretty healthy. England is only small, but there are loads of good producers and DJs that come out of the country. The UK is very competitive and although that's sometimes frustrating, it helps keep the music made in this country on the cutting edge. I'm just proud to be one of the people involved."

The inattentive attitude of the British music press towards underground music no doubt explains why Ben isn't overly concerned with media coverage himself. He admits that more people probably know of his name in Spain rather than London. "It's made absolutely no difference at all to me really. The UK press has an annoying habit of trying to dramatise things - personally I can't see the point of interviewing someone if you are just going to try and make them look a cunt in print. Maybe you only get decent write-ups if you pay for them... I don't know." Puzzling stuff indeed, considering the many prolific British artists with commanding global influence.

Like all progressive producers, the wealth of influence drawn into the creative mould ensures a varied and exploratory agenda. For example, his recent 'Hardgroove' double-pack displays very obvious disco influences: "At the moment I'm listening to quite a lot of disco, a lot of funk, a lot of 80's soul. The funkier side of things is definitely where I'm going to go". As one would expect, each of his four flourishing labels 'Hardgroove', 'Theory', 'Native' and 'Symbolism' (he didn't ever consider Killa Bite as a proper project) fill different niches in his musical manifesto. "Hardgroove, that's what I would call what I play - it's groove-based with a tough edge. If it's been in my box for a few months and I decide to put it out, that's where it goes." 'Theory' he describes as a fusion of different projects, inviting artists he respects to contribute alongside his own material. With mixes appearing on Theory from the likes of Jay Denham, Mark Broom, Blueprint and Claude Young its easy to see why the label has earned such a consistent following despite a relatively modest foothold in the market. "'Native' is more of an era thing than anything else" he explains; "The late 80's / early 90's when the first wave of UK techno producers were coming through - it's inspired by that sound, when it was more melodic. There's not many people putting tracks like that out - I really like it, I think it's timeless." His most recent imprint 'Symbolism' he views as having 'no specific sound' but rather as a means of purveying more mood inspired material - more of a personal statement, something he intends to develop with his forthcoming album for Berlin's mighty Tresor label. "I hope for it [the album] to reflect more of what I'm about or into. It's obviously much more of a challenge, but one that I'm excited about." With further releases planned on each of his labels throughout this year, and a mix compilation for Theory currently in the pipeline it seems like producing might finally sinks its teeth into his busy DJ schedule.

So, does he ever get a chance to spin much house or hip hop these days? "Not at the moment, but I will" he answers. "It's important to me to keep my influences open. I'd be happy to play either - they are my roots - I'll never forget that."

Symbolism #2 is due for release shortly.

WORDS>ALEX WARD

OVERLOAD MAGAZINE >BOOK OF THE ISSUE: 'NO LOGO' by Naomi Klein. Flamingo 2000 ISBN 000-225-919-6 490pp

Naomi Klein puts consumerism under the spotlight for a close examination of over-the-counter-culture and anti-corporate subversion. Once upon a time corporations manufactured products. They now market brands, acting as 'meaning brokers' that associate their products with lifestyles. Her portrayal of the big brands like Nike, McDonalds, Coca-Cola, IBM, Shell et al is often damning, but her line of attack is supported through extensive interviews with corporate directors and advertising executives. One marketing director said that 'brands must establish emotional ties with their customers' and another called consumers "roaches - you spray them and they get immune after a while."

Her behind the scene investigation into corporate production lines emphasise the dubious and immoral nature of the big brands. She traces Nike products back to abusive Vietnamese sweatshops and interviews slave-waged teenagers who assemble IBM computers - "we make computers but don't know how to operate them." An informed wide reaching perspective drives home the shocking realisation that third world child labour turns 'western babies into mini-billboards' and this got me thinking: how much blood and suffering is woven into my fashionable new fleece.

Intensive 'brand bombing' has inevitably created many victims in third world and Western economies, as corporations shut down factories in favour of sub-contractable and non-unionised sweatshops and bombard deprived ghettos with aspirational yet clearly unattainable billboard imagery. And then there are the fashion victims who global corporations rely on to determine world trade and crush cultural diversity. Despite Adland's disdainful treatment of roach-like consumers, I do not think they are the passive dupes Klein sometimes pre-supposes. Fashion is the epitome of capitalism. When was the last time you threw a garment away because it was you needed a new one? The fashion industry relies on its loyal flock to buy 'new' lines of designs every few weeks. Capitalism is imposed, irrational consumption is a choice. Consumers are not victims - fashion or otherwise - but active collaborators. How much blood on my new fleece?

Reclaim The Streets gets an entire chapter for claiming back public space from the corporations, advertising agencies, authorities and automobiles, and creating what Hakim Bey calls a Temporary Autonomous Zone. I was particularly impressed by Klein's collation of first hand reports from around the world that outlined simultaneous pan-global street party gatherings. The Culture Jamming chapter pulls together interviews, anecdotal evidence and imagery on the growth of subvertising, with Negativland, Chumbawamba, the McLibel trials and global billboard banditry remixing what we know, or thought we knew, about popular culture.

Essentially, No Logo is a siren going off. Corporations are the most political forces of our times. Naomi Klein believes that once more people discover the brand name secrets of the global web their outrage will fuel the next big political movement.

WORDS>SZA

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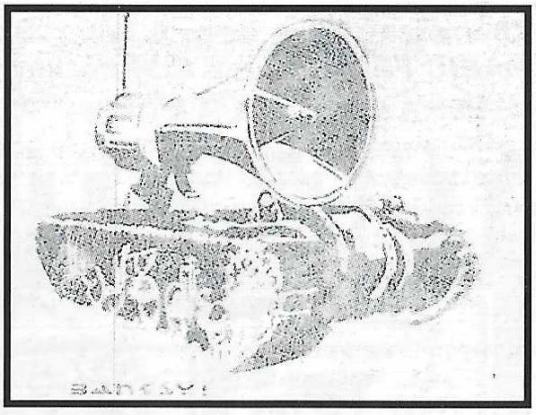
INFO@WAR

We are officially at war. I am not talking about glorious, painful and messy warfare that has defined our historical conception of conflict over territory and economic gain. The conflict in question is a defining feature of the information age. Your mind is at stake. Confused? You should be. The battle lines have been drawn up. The human mind defines the territory. Information warfare defines the age. Your beliefs may not be your own.

Visionary thinkers have warned us about the encroaching dangers of information warfare. In the past, warnings about misinformation missiles and propaganda bombs have been discounted as sci-fi informed futurist paranoia. However, as we tip toe through the debris of millennial hype, a new picture emerges. The conditions of information warfare have been accepted by a White House affiliated US Government think-tank. The Rand institute has argued that the information revolution is propelling power towards new non-governmental alliances and networks of civil organisations, leaving traditional nation state power bases in the cold. The authors of the Rand Institute report refer to the situation as a 'netwar': "Information related conflict between nations or societies. It means trying to disrupt or damage what a target population knows, or thinks it knows, about itself and the world around it. A social netwar may involve propaganda and psychological campaigns, battles for public opinion and for media access and coverage." The militaristic tone of the report suggests that information warfare is being taken extremely seriously as the possible style of future conflicts.

The battle to control information and manipulate the media has always been an integral cog in the war machine. Crude Iraqi propaganda and high tech allied media spin were defining features of the Gulf conflicts that scarred the Nineties. Interestingly, it is worth remembering that the catalyst for conflict was a dispute about restricting information. In Russia, the authorities have gone to extreme lengths to control news of their current war. The disturbing fate of Radio Liberty's war correspondent, Andrei Babitsky, symbolises the worst of Russia's crackdown on media coverage. He spent weeks reporting from inside the besieged Chechen capital for the US owned radio station, and repeatedly contradicted the official line taken by the Kremlin. He has recently, in accordance with the traditional Stalinist approach, been 'removed'. When foreign journalists requested a visit to the war zone, the military press officer told them: "What's going on here is none of your business. You wouldn't like it if we demanded to see what you get up to in your bedroom." But the question remains: who is shafting who? In Lebanon's capital of Beirut demonstrators have fought back against media misrepresentation. Angry at what they see as bias in CNN's coverage of Israeli attacks on Lebanese and American support for the attacks, 6000 demonstrators clashed with riot police and actually attacked CNN studios. Closer to home, the Northern Ireland situation has had more spins than a Jeff Mills set and has been rendered far too complex an issue for most people to embrace with insight. And maybe that's the point. Ponder a lyric from iconic Eighties punk outfit Culture Shock; 'Northern Ireland situation / war within a single nation / no one thinks of it as war / cos that's what televisions for…'

Almost every piece of history we haven't directly experienced has been altered by the time it reaches us, and in the High Court, history itself is currently on trial. The controversial historian, David Irving is questioning accepted beliefs about the Holocaust. He admits that some Jews were treated badly by the Nazis but denies that they were killed in gas chambers at Auschwitz, denies that Hitler directly ordered their slaughter and denies that their were any systematic plan to destroy European Jewry. Famous concentration camp footage and film of bodies being bulldozed into pits is



not reliable evidence for Irving. In a scene that could have come straight out of the satirical current affairs programme Brass Eye, but would have inevitably been banned for being insensitive, Irving claims that the victims were not gassed but died of "natural causes" and that the infamous gas chambers did not exist.

If an individual can dismiss the testimony of tens of thousands of witnesses where does this leave history? After all, Baudrillard has argued that the Gulf War never happened, some say the first lunar landing was fabricated in television studios and Overload has acquired hard evidence that proves beyond reasonable doubt that Rome was built in a day. If some of the most shocking imagery of the twentieth century can be written off as poppycock, how the hell can we trust anything we see, hear or believe? In our sophisticated media savvy society where everything is subject to spin, it is clear fascism doesn't come knocking at your door wearing jackboots and sporting a pencil moustache. In Austria's current political climate it wears a smart suit and kisses babies. In England: Neighbourhood Watch, CCTV, Shop a Benefit Fraud and Rat on a Rat poster campaigns. Everywhere you turn Little Brothers are watching you. Keep 'em peeled and remember, in the words of Michael Howard on the merits of the 1994 Criminal Justice Act, "normal people have nothing to fear…"

"(Language) is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind"
George Orwell.

WORDS>ED TWIST

BANKSY EXHIBITION

The images on this page are the work of Banksy, one of the most controversial and innovative street artists currently working the UK's concrete. Ripping up urban drudgery with his cans, stencils and a very sharp eye for suburban satire, Banksy's exploits have recently earned him a multi-album artwork deal with Breakbeat supremos Wall of Sound. From decorating the elephant enclosure at London Zoo (in elephants handwriting) with the slogan "I want out - this place is too cold", to being sandwiched between an armed response unit and Zoe Ball whilst stencilling the Radio 1 building, Banksy's attacks on 'the monotony of property' are gaining national notoriety. For the first time ever, examples of Banksy's work are being displayed in an exhibition in his native town of Bristol. He describes the measure as 'strictly temporary'.

"There are crimes that become innocent and even glorious through their splendor, number and technique", Banksy.

"Fucking fair play", Damien Hirst.

"There's no respect and there's no art here",
Superintendent Ian Shattock (Avon & Somerset Police).

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There may have been a few rumblings of late at the Radio 1 HQ, but TOM MAGIC FEET argues that nothing other than a full shake-up will lift the Nation's major radio station from its current murky depths...

THE NATION'S FAILURE

There must have been much celebrating at Radio 1 when the quarterly listening figures were recently published by the Radio Joint Audience Research body. The numbers - which Radio 1's management take extremely seriously - showed that Zoë Ball's breakfast show had topped 7m for the first time, adding 600,000 more listeners in the period and that Radio 1 retained the highest 'reach' of any station in the country with over 11m listeners a week.

No doubt Radio 1's management will have seen this as vindication of their current programming policies. But even at 11m+ weekly listeners, Radio 1 is still way behind the 20m the station enjoyed in the early 90s. This goes back to the sweeping changes which began in 1993 under then-controller Matthew Bannister, who came to the job with a vision of reinventing the station as a hip 'youf'-oriented broadcaster. Within a year or two, the old guard of DJs had been discarded and the music policy was completely revised. Listening figures plunged and have never recovered. Bannister was absolutely right to do this, of course. Old Radio 1 was a dinosaur and ripe for radical change. The problem is that the New Radio 1 he introduced was essentially a carbon copy of the original, save for a few cosmetic differences. And it still is. Radio 1 today is still built on certain key received wisdoms; the daytime/evening divide ('ratings by day, credibility by night') is one, the idea that some records can be deemed 'radio-friendly' while others (presumably 'radio-hostile') are not is another. Presenters are still hired for their ability to talk a lot of bullshit between records. There are still the same old on-air games, the pious 'campaigns', the roadshows, the superficial tabloid news bulletins and so on.

Most importantly of all, the music selection that Radio 1 plays is as narrow as ever, probably more so. Of course the daytime output of Old Radio 1 was tame and conservative, but it wasn't as dumb, false, materialistic and hollow as it is today. Take away the teeny boy bands (Boyzone, Westlife, 5ive), the foul, cliché-ridden commercial rap/r&b acts and the drug-trigger novelty dance one-offs and what have you got? The odd Travis or Bryan Adams record. 'The home of new music' indeed!

The Radio 1 playlist selection procedure is not based on sales or chart positions; if it were, both Cliff Richard and Aphex Twin's last singles would've been played on daytime. Nor is it based on any notions of artistic merit. The playlist doesn't even represent the best of the current crop of records, because most of the hundreds of releases every week aren't even considered. Instead, records are chosen on an entirely arbitrary, subjective basis according to what record companies present them with, what they think people want to hear, how big a star the artist is, how radio-friendly it seems to be, and so on. The few records that are picked are then played constantly for weeks on end, until long after all the fun, novelty and mystery has been sucked out of them. It's quite possible to hear a record on Radio 1 thirty-odd times in the week before its release and it's common to hear a record played in every consecutive daytime show. The final decision as to what music the public will be allowed to hear rests with the Head of Music. Back in 1995, this job went to Trevor Dann, who implemented the 'nothing before 1990' credo that the station has lived by ever since. This is why the likes of Jimi Hendrix, James Brown, the Rolling Stones, Prince, the Sex Pistols and the hundreds of others who have written the story of popular music never, ever get played (unless Westlife do a cover version, or Will Smith chooses to sample them). None of this would matter were it not for the fact that Radio 1 is still the primary conduit for popular music in this country. Even with the rise of music TV, commercial radio, festivals, the Internet etc, as the only national FM pop station in the UK (despite 'deregulation' under Thatcher), Radio 1 occupies a position of singularly pivotal importance in the cultural life of the nation.

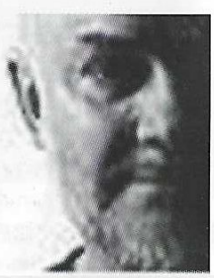
The music industry is only too aware of the station's unique importance. Ninety nine times out of a hundred, it is impossible to have a hit record without Radio 1 airplay. But while everybody knows that the industry needs Radio 1, Radio 1 inexplicably seems to think that it needs the industry. So when Madonna's record company see fit to dictate the date and time at which radio stations will be allowed to play her unbelievably lame cover of 'American Pie', Radio 1 falls neatly into line. A glance at the Radio 1 playlist shows that it is overwhelmingly dominated by major labels, despite the fact that the rise of the independents has been a key factor in the last two decades of popular music.

The most crucial point of all is that Radio 1 is funded by revenue from the licence fee. We have to pay for it. And public funding brings with it certain responsibilities and obligations. One of these relates to maintaining a certain level of output quality instead of just going for the lowest common denominator, something which will inevitably be catered for by the commercial sector. Another relates to the idea of balance: you know, that hoary old 'something for

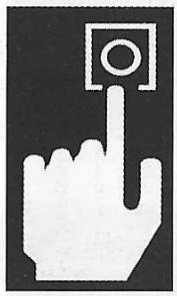
everyone' idea? Yet since Andy Parfitt took over the controller's job in 1998, the policy has been to confirm Radio 1's status as a youth station by specifically aiming at a teenage audience. Central to this strategy are key assumptions about the attention span and superficiality of young people: they only like certain familiar kinds of music, they want to hear the same records over and over, everything must be broken down into easily digestible soundbites, it's got to be in-your-face, noisy and glitzy with no long words and so on. Dumbing down, it's called. The idea is, of course, that those with an interest in music will tune in to the specialist evening shows instead. Radio listening figures drop off in the evening because of competition for leisure time from TV, cinema, the pub etc, so received radio wisdom says that's when you transmit your minority programming. Ergo, the more people are listening, the blander the music must be. Doesn't say much about the station's opinion of its audience, does it?

Specialist shows allow the station to perpetuate the myth that music, just like people, can be packaged up into neat little boxes, something we all know to be untrue. Essentially, they're little more than a sop: if the station was really committed to bringing the best new music to people they wouldn't be scheduled so late at night. Yet the station still clings to this daytime/evening divide theory: some kinds of music are somehow not suitable for daytime play. Inevitably this translates as anything vaguely different, unfamiliar or original - a pretty good definition of 'new music', if you ask me, the very thing that Radio 1 claims to champion. This would be laughable if it weren't so serious. A whole generation has now been raised on New Radio 1; a generation of youth who think that 'bands' are composed of professional dancers selected at auditions, that the Smash Hits roadshow is a gig and a Take That record is a pop classic. It's not their fault, they're products of their environment - people can only listen to what they're exposed to after all - but Radio 1 is a big part of that environment and must accept some of the responsibility for this sorry state of affairs. If you want proof, look at the results of the Music of the Millennium poll from late last year which saw the record-buying public vote Ronan Keating and Robbie Williams into the top 20! Or simply collar a few 15 year-olds, ask them to name some Jimi Hendrix or James Brown records and see how far you get. Perhaps the most damning criticism of all is that there are really only a couple of shows a week where you couldn't predict what you're going to hear in advance. Radio 1 should take note of the truth right under their noses: the longest-surviving, most respected and most influential DJ at Radio 1 is the one who's built his career on playing the best music he can find, period. Not for nothing is John Peel widely regarded as the most important figure in the history of British popular music.

Radio 1 needs nothing less than a total revolution from the bottom up. Dump the preconceptions about what people will and won't listen to. Drop the dated playlist system and build a new one that combines the best of the past with the best of the new. You can keep your gabbling presenters (except perhaps Moyles), your roadshows, your celebrity gossip and everything else. Just remember the position you're in: if you lead, others will follow. And play us the music. All of it.



WORDS>TOM MAGIC FEET



www.overloadmedia.co.uk

Over the coming months, the state of UK radio will be one of the topics we will be discussing during our online web forums. We invite your input. Visit Overload Online for further details, and also for a more in-depth version of 'The Nation's Failure' written by Tom Magic Feet.

>DECENT RADIO STATION SHOCKER!<

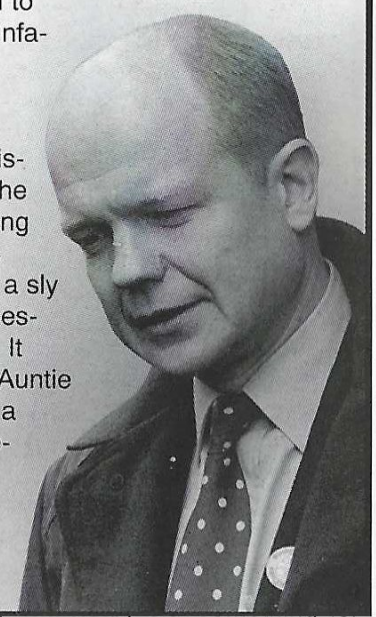
VIRTUAL FUTURE MUSIC LSR 87.7FM

The fourth series of Virtual FM starts on 17th March, bringing high quality underground electronic sounds to airwaves around Leeds. Presented by top spinner Paula Temple, Virtual FM has been providing a much-needed boost to the nation's barren frequencies with past mixes from major players such as Dave Clarke, Justin Berkovi, Claude Young, Ian O'Brien, Oliver Ho and Ben Long. Confirmed for the next series are Oxia (Goodlife), H (Red Seal) and Ibrahim Alfa. A special Overload mix in conjunction with Ugly Funk from Leicester is also scheduled for broadcast.
For further info & contact details visit:
www.virtualfm.demon.co.uk

SOAPY WITTANK

There are so many realities doing the rounds these days that anyone not thinking for themselves is probably losing their minds. However, allow yourself to become too open-minded and your brains will fall out.

How much more messy blurring between fact and fiction can we take? A soap character gets imprisoned as part of the plot and the nation goes ballistic. Red top rags campaign against the injustice and even the Prime Minister demands that Coronation Street's poor old Deirdre Rachid deserves to be set free. Soaps have more power than politics, especially since New Labour hammered the final nail in the coffin of ideology, leaving voters with no choice except which TV channel to switch to. New Labour's infamous spin-doctors have finally got in on the act. They have come up with their most subtle and sinister scheme to influence the masses. They are targeting The Archers, Eastenders and Coronation Street in a sly bid to insert subliminal messages into the storylines. It wasn't too long ago that Auntie Beeb got her knickers in a twist about product placement. The world has indeed gone Blair shaped.



UR WARS

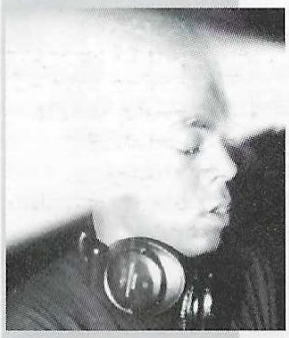
UR'S ONGOING FIGHT AGAINST CORPORATE THEFT

Reports of this story began filtering out to the public in early December last year. Initial information suggested that a release bearing uncanny similarity to 1999's hugely successful techno track 'Knights Of The Jaguar' by The Aztec Mystic AKA DJ Rolando from Underground Resistance, was being aired on German radio. However, whilst this song resembled UR's track in melody, it had the style and structure of a commercial trance record...

Around the same time, the UR camp received a mail from Dirk Dreyer, A&R Manager for Sony Music Germany. He confirmed that the track in question did exist, and explained that it was a Sony commissioned 'cover version'. Dreyer expressed that he thought the track should be 'available to a lot of people, much more than just people going to vinyl shops,' and tried to defend his intentions by claiming that UR had ignored Sony subsidiary 'Discomania's request for licensing. Later that day, a message was sent from Cornelius Harris, a UR Spokesperson, to fans, mailing lists and the media. Harris's mail outlined that a rogue version of the track was doing the rounds in Germany, and urged readers to contact Sony, voicing their objection. Angry fans reacted by bombarding Sony offices with a tirade of e-mails and faxes, demanding that the offending release be withdrawn. In response to the outcry, Dirk Dreyer sent correspondence back to UR, copying in members of the public who had e-mailed him. Whilst his attempts to explain himself and his (financial) motivations served only to anger supporters further, he stated that Sony had decided to withdraw the track, leading many to believe that this was the end of the issue.

Dreyer had indicated in his e-mail that there may be further attempts to license the track, saying "We are quite sure that a different company will use the idea and milk the cashcow" - and in mid-January it emerged that this was the case, quite possibly as a result of Dreyer sub licensing the piece himself ($$$). BMG/Ariola now scheduled its release. Cornelius Harris sent another mail out to fans, detailing this new insult, and again fans protested, this time to the new violator - BMG. On February 7, BMG posted a promotional message to their web site - "Because the original of this title will not be released, a production team from Frankfurt has re-recorded it and added a trance remix which will blow your hairs away" the blurb lied - 'Knights Of The Jaguar' is still available in record shops worldwide under the Aztec Mystic moniker- far from unreleased.

Instead of taking on the Corporate giants in the law courts where the Majors possess a financial advantage, UR have opted for a different tactic. In the words of leader Mad Mike - "These wars will be fought in a new arena - out here in deep space where the playing field is more level..... we are musicians with no muscle - we can only implant ideas via music..... a co-ordinated effort of the underground global community will be needed to attack such a giant nemesis...". Elsewhere in Detroit, the 430 West label joined the fight with the proactive step of re-releasing the original 'Knights Of The Jaguar' featuring new remixes from Jeff Mills, Mad Mike, and Octave One. The new versions will be released on CD format also, with increased distribution to Europe and North America. At the time of writing, BMG had just completed the cover design for the trance version and were preparing for its imminent release. UR and their supporters continue the campaign of resistance online.



"Underground Resistance is such a grass roots movement, it's like Sony and BMG have just tripped on a root. It's like they tried to pick it up and move it, but it just pulls up more earth and goes to the next tree and the next tree. They opened up something that they are not ready for, mentally and physically. It's unfortunate that this had to happen, but this is the battle that Mike Banks has been working for his whole life - this is what he stands for. Like he said, he foresaw it." **Tim Baker, Real Estate, Chicago.**

The Law... One thing that has shrouded the controversy throughout is the actual legal standpoint of all the parties involved. The original recording is protected under US law, which states that once a track is recorded and distributed it is possible for anyone to remake the song as a cover, providing they obtain what is known as a 'Mechanical License' from the publishing company. This license will amongst other things dictate the terms of the financial settlement to be paid to the original artist. UR have at no point given permission for a Mechanical License to be issued, and have been given no royalties from the new version, either from Sony or BMG, despite early copies of both being released. So, legally UR have grounds for action. However, here's the clincher - Major labels have a great deal of experience with copyright cases (go ask George Michael) and the financial muscle to be able to work their way around the law. One popular tactic is to appeal repeatedly, dragging the courtroom process out for months on end until the independent party cannot afford to continue the battle any longer and is forced to back down.

WORDS>NICK CRADDOCK

CHECK OUT OVERLOAD'S WEB BROWSER (OPPOSITE PAGE) FOR DETAILS OF ONLINE RESISTANCE.

OVERLOAD WEB BROWSER

ESSENTIAL WEB MATTER

Google:
http://www.google.com
Search Engines. They can fill you with either unbridled joy when you find that net resource you've been searching for... or absolute frustration and hatred when they return 100,000 results on a one-word search, the majority of which offer sites that disappeared 6 months ago, or porn. What's more, the most famous search engines; Yahoo!, Alta Vista, MSN and Lycos, are all concentrating on enhancing their sites with sections for all the favourite big-money web-categories; finance, job-hunting etc. So much so that the actual search-engines seem to have been left behind. So all praise to Google. A search-engine that does one thing only - and damn well. Type in what you want and Google will magically come up with it. There isn't much else to say. It's the best *(although www.dogpile.com is a bit bloody nifty too,* Ed*)*.

Chickenhead:
http://www.chickenhead.com
Quirky American site that revels in 50's imagery and dark humour. Mainly worth a visit for the brilliant animated banner ads taking the mickey out of modern fashion culture, consumer insecurity and medical miracle products. "Lousy job, kids hate you, failed marriage: PILLS!...problem solved!" Bloody great.

Index on Censorship:
http://www.indexoncensorship.org
Great site from the magazine of the same name. Serves more as a taster for the dead-tree version, with selected articles reproduced each issue. There is still a lot to educate & inform here though and if you're interested in protecting the right to free-speech we should all have a right to have, you should check this out and then get a subscription to the magazine.

Hermski - Spectrum Emulator:
http://www.emulation.clara.net/spectrum.htm
Want a nostalgia trip? They don't get much better than this... Hermski's spectrum emulator has the full range of ZX spectrum emulators (48k - 128k v3) and a whole host of games so you can turn your PC into the original (half-decent) home computer. Not only will it remind you of the joys of simple, imaginative game-play, your eyes will be treated to a feast of colour-clash and monochrome moodiness. Whilst the selection of games is big, it's not that good...but never fear because Hermski has a downloadable list of over 1000 games that you can request off him. Oh yes, you will soon realise that Horace Goes Skiing was 1,000,000 times better than TombQuakeKingpinRaiderGrandTheftSimCity.

MulletsGalore:
http://mulletsgalore.com/index.html
Rapidly gaining the sort of cult reputation that can only come from a truly great idea. Mullets Galore presents you with a whole host of mullet photos, all categorised and described in very humorous terms, if slightly un-PC at times. The style is pure darkness, the attitude is viscious and the haircuts are truly, truly shocking.

TheSpark:
http://www.thespark.com
A bit of a confused triumph of style over content. There is a mixture of satirical stories, weird life-style tips and normal reviews of music and film. Definitely orientated towards students, it has an on-line notes resource on a whole host of classic literature, all written by Harvard graduates. I say it's worth keeping an eye on...it's got potential to be a big, classy monster of a site.

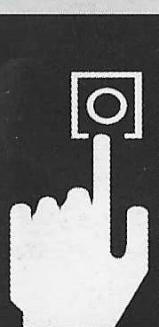
Refuse & Resist:
http://mojo.calyx.net/~refuse/altindex.html
A whole host of articles and correspondence, which whilst being predominantly American prove enlightening reading for the armchair activist.

A White Brit Rave Aesthete Thinks Aloud:
http://members.aol.com/blissout/front.htm
Simon Reynolds is one of the Uks best music writers, combining a love of 'dumb-rave' with a serious academic way of thinking. Here, the author of Energy Flash has articles ranging from Early Acid House to Dark Rave to Jungle's crisis days to the advent of speed garage as the new rave. You may not agree with everything the man says, but as a writer Reynolds has a cunning ability to skirt around all the hype that surrounds so much of dance music and cut to the real driving forces of the matter. This should be an essential site for anyone who thinks that techno and jungle have lost their 'soul' of recent years.

Get involved with the UR vs SONY debate.
Log on to the following web sites:
http://www.egroups.com/list/ur-records
http://www.RenegadeRhythms.com/ur
http://barkingcat.org/counterforce
http://www.submerge.com
http://www.fyi.net/~frisket/
http://mycal.net/ifj/ur

OVERLOAD ONLINE

http://www.overloadmedia.co.uk
Yep. Overload Online has been up and running since NYE. Although we can't promise lots of flashing lights and tedious eye candy, you'll hopefully find enough regularly updated stimuli to make your visit one of many. Function not fashion, right? Or something like that. Log onto Overload Media for:



Latest news.
Exclusive interviews.
Updated record reviews.
Extended versions of mag items.
MP3 and Real Audio tracks from artists featured within the magazine, and the best in new talent.
Articles on: Techno Tourism, Megabucks DJ prices, The general state of play...
Check it out!

WORDS>PAUL GANNAWAY

INTENSIVE CARE

It's now four albums down the line for Surgeon, one of the world's most talented and innovative electronic artists. After years of intensive DJ work on the global club circuit, Tony Child has finally achieved a balance between performing and producing. With a new label underway and an ongoing quest for tonal evolution, Birmingham's dark doctor has plenty of therapy left to administer. Still no appearance on Top of the Pops though...

Tony Child does not make pop music. Fed on a diet of Faust, Coil, Throbbing Gristle and other exponents of Eighties industrial wierdcore, this mild-mannered Brummie shares little common ground with the mainstream manipulation of music culture. "I like intensity" he explains frequently throughout the interview. "But there's different ways of doing it. I don't really like 'bang bang bang' - I like more 'vooooooov'" he enthuses, flexing his jaw line to emulate the kind of sub-bass Hoover noise that would probably floor you through a 30k rig. He describes his new double pack on Dynamic Tension as being very heavy, direct and physical - just what you'd expect from a record entitled 'Body Request'.

Intensity, it seems, is his pleasure - a pleasure reflected not just by what many might term as 'unusual' musical preferences, but also by his preferred choice of books and films. He enthusiastically cites novels such as 'American Psycho' and films like Mike Lee's 'Naked' and Roman Polanski's 'Rosemary's Baby' to be among his favourites. Personality and music-making are intrinsically linked - and knowing a little more about his character certainly seems to give me a better understanding of his hugely varied output. Intensity can work on different levels within music, as the fifty or so diverse releases in his discography illustrate. Since his seminal 'Magneze' (as immortalised on Jeff Mills' 'Live at the Liquid Rooms' mix), his back-catalogue has become increasingly more experimental, more explorative - more eclectic even - if the term weren't so synonymous with big beat and lounge-core. When his first Tresor long-player 'Basictonalvocabulary' was released, both the title, and more importantly the tracks, hinted at a broader future agenda than just cuts for the clubs. He can see little point in rehashing the winning dance-floor formula used for his classic early releases such as 'Magneze' and 'Badger Bite'. "You can release records and its just pure product - hit on a formula and just pump them out. It's too easy - it's not a challenge to the person making the music and its almost insulting people's intelligence." I immediately think of his 'Basictonal Remake' EP, containing possibly the most intense and original techno track I've heard in recent years - the one all my friends affectionately refer to as 'the one with the killer bees'…

His Dynamic Tension label, now reaching its seventh release, focuses on pure tense electronic sound. "There's something about having an intensity that's never quite letting go - that's the 'tension' thing with it" he explains before going on to illuminate the concept behind his new label 'Counterbalance'. "The second Counterbalance is done. It's called 'La Real', which is the name of a club in the north of Spain. The third one is being worked on at the moment by Pete from Berlin [of Hardwax / Dubplates and Mastering fame] - he did 'Substance' on chain reaction, but it's obviously very different from that. He described it to me as 'industrial Latin'. The idea behind Counterbalance is taking the essence of other music and turning it into techno. It's not this, that or the other, it's not pure at all. It's fusion, where you take samples from music genres that are influential to you - more funkier and dancier styles - and deconstruct them and reconstruct them, but not in a way that's recognisable, not where you just take a one bar hook and repeat it." The vision of a man obsessed by intensity fades everso slightly when he goes on the list some influences for the label… "Lots of old records that I remember from when I used to like electro - from when I used to go to a roller rink. Things like Shannon 'Let the Music Play', some old stuff by Zap, strange old disco - things from the fun party-side, rather than intense weird electronic stuff. Pete's just done a cut-up with some R&B track, you'd never know it but that's where the original hits and beats come from."

"It was very, very heavy - we were using different frequencies to rattle different bits of the room...."

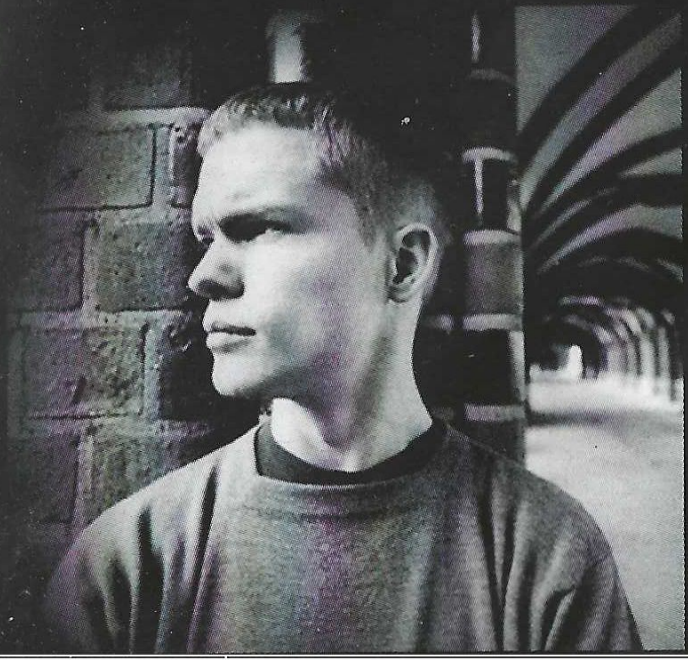
His reputation for playing heavy and hard in the clubs has recently led him to reassess his DJing direction. Finding little heavier new tunage to suit his taste, he experimented at a gig in Manchester by spinning all his own material. "I've been doing that much more lately - it's about presenting and representing the Birmingham sound". Indeed, the concrete sprawl of Birmingham is where he feels most comfortable, far away from the frenzied media circus that performs each day in the Big Smoke. He describes the capital's medley of label runners, distributors and magazines as 'a bit schmoozy', a distraction his music can well do without. "So many magazines are London-based and don't see anything outside of that. They don't look a few hundred miles north, we're all living in the stone-age up here aren't we?" Tony gibes. He painfully recounts a tale about attending the first ever Musik Magazine awards when

they were held in Birmingham, persuaded by two complimentary tickets and a free bar. "I just ended up wanting to kill people, drunken, shouting, making an arse of myself. It was really, really horrible. I still get sent 'Blah Blah Christmas party' invites, but I can't think of anything worse than being in a room full of arseholes on coke."

He is understandably weary of talking about drugs to the press, ever since a journalist stitched him up by printing casual conversation portrayed as an anti-drugs rant. "It's great to have a good time obviously" he remarks, "but as time goes on the bad elements far outweigh the good elements". He mentions philosophy as a more useful way of freeing the mind. Clearly he resents the extent to which the British scene revolves around chemical entertainment. "It doesn't have anything to do with the music I make at all" he continues, "I think I'd made the sickest music before I'd even got drunk. It's got no relation to 'Oh, I took loads of acid and then I started liking and making weird music.' If you go to Japan you have people there going absolutely wild until eight in the morning on a Monday night, and they are all going straight to work from there. It's obvious that no one there has had any drugs at all, they still go absolutely crazy to the music. It's nice because they are totally aware, their reactions are quicker - they can hear exactly what you are doing. You can't fool them, you can't use simple tricks and clichés."

"I think I'd made the sickest music before I'd even got drunk. It's got no relation to 'Oh, I took loads of acid and then I started liking and making weird music."

Tony's turbulent rhythmic influence may have been felt in the clubs for the past five years, yet it's his more recent output that has exhibited the full extent of his incredible experimental agenda. 'Balance', the second Surgeon long-player for Berlin's Tresor label suggested the importance of equilibrium within music (coincidentally a philosophy he appears to recommend for all aspects of positive living) by juxtaposing ferocious and beautiful compositions with masterful insight. His unexpectedly calming remix for indie-space cadets Mogwai some two years ago proved pivotal in allowing a broader public perception of his work.



Although releases such as Balance had readily displayed more abstract directions within his music, it was the Mogwai track (a serene tonal wave building slowly with intensity) that finally broke the restrictive mould set in place by the media during his initial rise to prominence. Last year witnessed further releases that distanced him from the tough percussive funk of his dance-floor orientated material. His astonishing textural composition 'Over Napoli' (released on Slut Smalls under his own name) reinforced his soundcraftmanship, as did his highly emotive 'Guitar Treatments' with Andrew Read (on Fat Cat) and a splendid down-tempo reworking of LFO's 'Nurture' for Warp's remix compilation.

A close association with ex-Napalm Death drummer Mick Harris (the driving-force behind Scorn and Lull) has given rise to numerous experimental forays, including a forthcoming studio project forging broken beats with dub, hip hop and other influences. "Mick is certainly a key figure in me releasing records, letting me use his studio before I knew him that well, and introducing me to Karl [Regis]. Without him the whole thing wouldn't have happened." Tony relates contrasting tales of the two experimental live sets played by Mick and himself as 'Certain Beyond All Reasonable Doubt', one in Sheffield (that went down 'like a lead balloon'), and another in Berlin. "I was really looking forward to the one in Sheffield, it was billed as an experimental all-dayer. There were a lot of really interesting well-respected artists on, but the audience seemed to be all journalists and indie kids. Mick and I started and the room was full - it was so obvious that they were waiting for the intro to finish and the beats to kick in, which it didn't. The room just gradually thinned out until there was just a handful of people lying on the floor listening to an hour of tonal stuff. It was very, very heavy - we were using different frequencies to rattle different bits of the room..." Perhaps too much for most on a Monday afternoon in May, but would that experience put him off trying something like that again in Britain? "Probably yes. It's not as if there aren't people who really appreciate and understand that music, but I think it's just generally misunderstood, and that's the problem." His narrative of events in Germany paints a very different picture using what would appear to be an eminently more suitable canvas. "When we did it in Berlin we had the whole night. It was in a place where they often put on experimental events - a small very cold cellar with one red light, a disco ball and a really nice PA. We began by DJing a mixture of dub and Coil and Faust, then we did our live thing for about two hours. It's such introverted stuff, people just sat there and looked perturbed - but it went down fairly well. You don't expect people to clap when you finish, but we got a good reaction."

With corporate hijacking of dance culture so rife across the globe he is glad the music has managed to avoid the cursed barrage of bandwagoneers. "I'm not someone who regards it as 'ours' and something nobody else can have. But when something gets hyped more people become involved who don't really feel it - then you get more crap records. The magazines keep saying 'techno's dead, techno's back, techno's dead...' Oh, is it? Never mind."

'La Real' is out shortly on Counterbalance.

WORDS>ALEX WARD

"Future shock could be the most important disease of tomorrow", wrote Alvin Toffler more than thirty years ago. I get future shock in my home town, in the cement garden of England...

Kent has suffered some of the most devastating environmental annihilation thanks to Channel Tunnel rail links, Millennium Dome madness and the town slaying, car worshipping cathedrals of consumption like Bluewater Park - the biggest shopping centre in Europe. In the name of progress, technology has promised consumer heavens and spawned hell. Future shock is the disease of change. It has profound psychological and sociological consequences. Toffler warned that unless people learn to control the rate of change in their personal lives, as well as those in society at large, they are doomed to suffer a disorientating adaptional breakdown: "Millions of psychologically normal people will face an abrupt collision with the future. Citizens of the worlds richest and most technologically advanced nations will find it increasingly painful to keep up with the incessant demand for change." Has the future arrived too soon?

A technologically saturated society is corrupting our minds with data. We are addicted to the pulse of electronic communications. Technological-obsessive-compulsive behaviour causes people to confuse information with knowledge. There is only one cure: unplug from the machine.... Fifty per cent of the UK now own mobile phones - but does it make life easier? They disrupt and distract, speeding up the pace of your daily life. Adopting new technologies was supposed to increase leisure time, but now you can take the office home with you. Workers are wiring themselves into the computer's 24/7 time zone, replacing the clear cut 9-5. No wonder managers are encouraging employees to use mobile laptops and mobile phones. Optimum efficiency drives the information age. The productivity gains of the technological revolution have undoubtedly created phenomenal prosperity, but our enjoyment of simple pleasures have been eroded by the invasion of new technologies that knock us off track and de-rail our brains. The irritating demands of the artificial matrix of mobile phones, pagers and computers allow us to multitask yet restrict movement. The accelerating speed of time means we end up running so fast that we cannot move. In the words of Erik Davis: "We lose the capacity to speak and act from within, and communication is reduced to a reactive, almost technical operation. And so we drown, believing that to drown is to surf."

More than 25 million homes in Western Europe now have Internet access, compared with half that number last year. This is predicted to rise to 60 million homes (45 % of Western Europe) within the next 4 years. We are on the verge of a golden age, but will the new economy bring about a new politics? Will widespread use of new technology create a better world? One thing is clear: Inequality is growing. The UK has never been so divided. The number living below the European Union poverty line has tripled since 1979 and the gap between the lowest and highest paid is wider than at any time since the late nineteenth century. The UK has enjoyed steady economic growth throughout the nineties, a trend that shows no signs of abating, yet there is a disturbingly large underclass untouched by this prosperity. The Internet is set to contribute to an increasingly divided society, severing society along the same old class, age, gender, and geographical based lines as any other new technology. The pro-libertarian, quasi-socialist impetus for the development of the Internet as a tool for communication has, like every other altruistic idea in the history of human kind, led to hijacking by commercial forces. As consensus reality is propelled fast forward into a cyberspace future, those left inhabiting the stone cold reality of planet earth will find themselves' increasingly information poor, as well as financially disadvantaged. Information exclusion is fast becoming a defining feature of the information age.

Technologically developed, economically advanced societies are bad for your health. They are the wealthiest ever and, in general terms their members have enough to eat and are able to exercise wide choices in how they live their lives. Yet increases in depression, anxiety neurosis, addiction, eating disorders, anti-social, criminal and violent behaviour have been steadily rising since 1950. Up to 2/3 of the UK's population suffer from mental health problems at any one time. These numbers are increasing all the time. Modern life fucks you up. To feel fucked up is to feel normal. You are not alone. One could argue that this is an inevitable effect of being cooped up in the human zoo. In experiments where apes are kept in claustrophobic conditions for long periods, a high percentage suffer from the same psychological conditions as outlined above.

There is a direct relationship between increasing levels of disorientation, anxiety and stress and intense techno-media overload. Toffler argued that much of the bewilderment, frustration and disorientation that results from accelerated change is causing a breakdown in communications, misreadings of reality and an inability to cope. Hmmm. Reality? Run that by me one more time.... How can we be expected to 'read' reality when, in the words of Philip K. Dick, "We live in a society in which spurious realities are manufactured by media, governments, by big corporations, by religious groups and political groups... Unceasingly we are bombarded with pseudo realities manufactured by sophisticated people using sophisticated electronic mechanisms". Jean Baudrillard diagnoses the social condition as hyperreal. He defined this as social, political and perceptual organisation based on the dominance of technological simulacra. The hyperreal is like a virus that destroys older frameworks for understanding the real, replacing it with a new order of reality based on simulation. A programmed, simulated society is a paragon of social control.

You have reached overload.

WORDS>ED TWIST

OVERLOAD
NEW RELEASES

REVIEWS COMPILED IN ASSOCIATION WITH MAGIC FEET

Welcome to the new music release section of Overload.

Record reviews by their very nature tend to be incredibly subjective things. Whilst we'll be taking every precaution to keep these pages bullshit free and to the point, please don't be offended if one of our seasoned review squad squirts a little venom from time to time. It's only an opinion, right...? Please send new material for review to Overload Media:

Overload Media
PO Box 41
Bristol
BS16 3ZB.

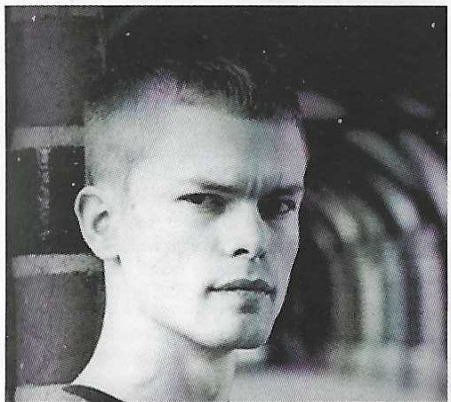
(Please note, inclusion cannot be guaranteed due to constraints of space. The text is quite small enough as it is).

REVIEW SQUAD THIS ISSUE...
Tom Magic Feet, Dave Stelfox, Motorboy, Bloodshot, Harvey Lane, Paul Gannaway, Richard Wilkes, Valerie Snails.

SINGLES

KYOTO JAZZ MASSIVE 'Silent Messenger/Eclipse' (Compost)
The Kyoto Jazz Massive comprises of two brothers who go by the names of Shuya and Yoshihiro Okino and make wonderful, floor-filling contemporary music. 'Silent Messenger' is fuelled by mid-tempo Latin-style drum workouts and jumpy hi-hats, layered with ethereal vocals and driving strings. Meanwhile, 'Eclipse' blends off-kilter stepping rhythms with freeform pianos and a groove that develops into a loping bass-driven storm. Compost show why they remain top of the heap yet again. **DS**

SURGEON 'Diaetric EP' (Counterbalance)


SURGEON

Anthony Child's new label project kick-starts with an excellent three-tracker of dark bass-heavy rhythmic funk. Each cut is quite derivative of a basic tonal blueprint, yet all are executed with contrasting levels of intensity and atmospheric design to fabricate a very worthy first release. Oh, and watch out for the kick on A1. **VS**

JON NUCCLE 'Tension' (Core)
Latest Core 4-track EP from Orbit man Nuccle, featuring more two fierce Northern techno cuts accompanied by a couple of down-tempo breakbeat tools. The breakbeat cuts are cool enough but as you would expect from Nuccle, it's the techno that causes the interest; rampantly full on from the onset and surprisingly trancey, but with plenty of hard kick to please the dance-floor. **M**

PROFESSOR TRAXX WEED PEOPLE 'Your Ass is Grass' (Creators of Deepness)
After an utterly brilliant first release, this second outing for the Creators of Deepness has much to live up to. No disappointments here though, five tracks spread over two 12s and not a duffer amongst them. All offer lush minimal percussion with a distinct US flava and are so unbelievably deep that, unless you're very careful, listening to them is will cause decompression sickness. **M**

MARCIN CZUBALA 'Bass Casualties EP' (Currently Processing)
Bassy 4-tracker of Polish bump 'n grind visiting the wonderfully murky depths inhabited by Sativae, Drought and co. Track titles like 'Poznan Bass' and 'Drive You Mad' paint a pretty clear picture of the game plan - an abundance of sub-bass, caustic percussion and spooky overtones. Somehow it all remains remarkably accessible - well, except the remix spat out by Sativae honcho Dave Tarrida - a wigged-out brain bender with a downright sleazy bottom end. True grit. **VS**

LAURENCE RICHIE 'Filter Interference' (Drop Music)
Nottingham's Drop crew continue putting depth back into deep house muzak by adding four more premium productions to their books. Reassuringly driven by the bottom end, utilising well-swung percussion and funky bass progressions to manaouvre the herds. Can't go far wrong with labels like this. **VS**

>RECOMMENDED<
N)E(M 'Third Space EP' (Elektrolux)
Four outstanding electro cuts on Holland's brilliant Elektrolux label. All are dance-floor orientated, not as lo-fi as Elektrolux's previous releases, more on an atmospheric breakbeat tip. The title track is perhaps the best, featuring large funky basslines, chunky electro rhythms and an infectious little melody - it builds, drops and picks up again in true style. I don't know who N)E(M are but they're definitely worth looking out for. **M**

BEN LONG 'Ergonomix Part 1' (Ergonomix)
Back in the day (1994 to be precise), a certain Mr Mills released a certain record ('Cycle 30' to be precise) which contained a side of locked grooves for use by techno DJs. By doing this he set a precedent - whether this was good or bad remains a matter of personal opinion. Six years later, a certain Mr Long (Ben Long to be precise) launches Ergonomix, pure locked loops for DJs, and plenty of them. Mighty fine they are too. **VS**

TAKKYO ISHINO 'Feeling' (Exceptional)
Quirky techno pop from Japan's Takkyo Ishino, featuring the unlikely pairing of Meat Katie and Oliver Ho on remix duty. Katie's version is mighty similar to the original mix but striped-down and harder, sort of Hardfloor meets Perfecto with a hint of Westbam thrown in, however it's Ealing's Oliver Ho (surely a workaholic) who delivers the most dance-floor friendly mix; tight, funky percussion, hardly recognisable from the Ishino track. I just can't help loving the original though. Check. **M**

TOMMY GILLARD 'Rouge Beat Volume One' (Figment)
Figment's sixth release to date, and an absolute blinder at that. This is techno at its funkiest; off beat Latin rhythms, disco guitar licks and vocal loops that are as good as anything Parliament ever produced, all blended, cut up and looped to maximum effect. Imagine Daft Punk meets Ben Sims at Rio's Mardi Gras and you still aren't close. If you thought techno is just banging 4/4 beats 'free your mind and your ass WILL follow'. **M**

LEE COOMBS 'Future Sound of Retro / Air Guitar' (Fingerlickin)
Fingerlickin tend to head for the funky rather than dark end of the dance-floor, and this is certainly where Lee Coombs resides with 'Air Guitar'. And there's nothing wrong with that, especially when it's so well done like this killer acidic builder. On the flip 'Future Sound of Retro' hits house / techno territory with a furious bass line. Play loud and you won't be disappointed. **B**

BONOBO 'Scuba' (Fly Casual Recordings)
Fly Casual Recordings' debut release trawls through sonic textures as Bonobo's Simon King surfs tides of crackling vinyl noise, flamenco-style strings and loose, yet crisp breaks, with layered hip hop-production techniques adding to the overall sense of liquid rhythm. But the profoundly evocative Amon Tobin remix of 'Scuba' is the deepest cut by far. Tobin dives into electronica's aqueous realms, moored to bass-heavy harmony and whips up a dense percussive storm of hypnotic intensity. **DS**

RANDOM NOISE GENERATION 'The Existence of Echelon' (430 West)
One of Detroit's most interesting labels, 430 West is usually sought after for it's electro releases. Here they deliver four deep and minimal techno tracks, all feature locked in rolling beats and slow building melodies with a definite soulful Detroit feel. 'Echelon' and 'Human NT' stand out in particular, both of which are currently enjoying success on the world's dance-floors. Recommended. **M**

>RECOMMENDED<
OXIA 'Etat D'esprit EP' (Goodlife)
Oliver Raymond makes a welcome return for his second stunning solo release on this Grenoble-based label. The typical Goodlife format is kept here, with one straight up Electro track and three floor-fillers bringing a very electronic sound - kind of User meets David Caretta. 'Last test part.1' is the killer track doing the damage literally everywhere at the moment - total appeal. **HL**

BEN SIMS 'The Dubs' (Hardgroove)
Killer double pack from London's man of the moment, with driving Millsian rhythms, heady

vocal bites and powerful disco stabs making for unstoppable dance floor fodder. 'Impact' brings Latino funk to the fore with devastating effect, whilst other unreleased dubplate tracks and special mixes provide a host of rhythmic derivatives on Sim's trademark sound. His superb twisted 'Hardgroove Mix' of 'Repercussion' (taken from Theory 002) also makes a re-appearance, which makes for a stronger package if you missed out first time round. **VS**

UNIVERSAL SESSIONS 'HP1215' (Hybrid)
Stockholm's shinning star Cari Lekebusch teams up with Aaron Phiri to produce what is undoubtedly one of Hybrid's most interesting moments; four tracks of outstanding electro/techno, similar to but not as harsh as many of the current wave of Detroit releases. It cleverly combines old school, b-boy vocoded rapping with a very contempory electro sound, and all four tracks easily hold their own. **M**

UNIVERSAL SESSIONS 'Instrumentalicks' (Hybrid)
Cari Lekebusch and Aaron Phiri stray even further from a 4/4 beat with this 2-track 10" release. Both cuts feature infectious rhythms and sinister distorted vocals with plenty other ongoing stimuli thoughout. A useful addition to any DJ's box. **M**

MEAT KATIE 'Strange Fruit / Our Destruction' (Kingsize)
Meat Katie drops the prominent breaks of previous releases and heads for the four four beats, with deep, deep basslines and just a hint of break in the background. Standout track here is 'Strange Fruit', mashing techno / disco sounds with nu-skool attitude to create a real monster. After taking on jungle last year, it seems like the breakbeat artist is now has techno in its sights. The question is, will techno DJs take it on board? **B**

>RECOMMENDED<
OLIVER HO 'Now EP' (Cosmic ID)
Latest offering from Steve Bicknell's respectable Lost offshoot imprint sees Oliver Ho in the kind of form that is fast earning him a name as one of the world's most exciting producers. This is pure Latin-disco-tech funk; pacey, full of abrupt vocal stabs and looped disco riffs, very percussive and guaranteed to please. I recommend you buy two copies of this record, as you'll be sure to wear one out. Get to it. **M**

EVIL NINE 'Less Stress / Special Move' (Marine Parade)
Marine Parade take nu-skool breaks on a more progressive tip from the norm (even attracting the likes of Sasha and Digweed), and this atmospheric breakbeat bass rumbler is no exception. Walk into this tune during the breakdown and the synth stabs would have you believe you're gonna hear the latest dark offering from junglist Andy C, until the breakbeats kick back in that is. Both tracks play out very well and set a standard for others to follow. **B**

CHRIS McCORMACK 'Undercover of Darkness EP' (Materials)
Expertly assisted on remix duty by Ade Fenton and the Space DJz, Chris McCormack delivers a cracking four-track EP of funky percussive techno. Packed full of quirky breaks, shifting drum patterns and filtered effects all four tracks twist, turn and drop in and out whilst maintaining a tight dance-floor drive. Anybody concerned with the current state of techno isn't checking the quality and innovation of releases such as this. Highly recommended. **M**

MINOTAUR SHOCK 'The Bagatelle EP' (Melodic)
Following last year's subtly gorgeous Pedro EP, the UK's fledgling Melodic label hits the right note once again with Bristol's Minotaur Shock. 'The Bagatelle EP' blends layers of wandering keys and percussion with jazzual, post-rocking ease. From the opening '46 Tops' to the sublimely atmospheric 'Albert Park Music', David Edwards orchestrates four tracks of mellifluous rhythm for those who like their bedroom-based electronica with a fragile, future-folkin' touch. **DS**

JOEL PONS / HD SUBSTANCE 'Espania EP' (Morpheus)
The third Morpheus release enlists artists from Madrid and Barcelona to produce a delightfully interesting and varied EP of floor-friendly house / tech rhythms. Joel Pons opts for some classy minimalism shifting through varying stages of intensity to good effect whilst Madrid's HD Substance finds a funkier, almost uplifting groove on the flip. Spain seems to be a bit of a techno Mecca at the moment - must be all the sun, sand and cheap booze. Come to think of it, what the fuck am I doing here? **VS**

>RECOMMENDED<
BERND FRIEDMANN / ATOM HEART 'Nonplace EP 1' (Nonplace)
Jazzoid-cyberlatin-dub-funk if you will. That's the sketch with Cologne's Nonplace label, an imprint from which much beauty and buffoonery is assuredly assured. Kick starting with Bernd (Burnt) Friedmann (Friedman), his newly-formed beat combo 'The Disposable Rhythm Section', and his former Ninja Tune cohort Atom Bomb, 'EP1' is both absurd and utterly brill in equal measures as it takes dub 'n breaks to unchartered territory with what is probably a totally unintentional air of responsibility to the listener's comfort. Anyone who picked up on Amon Tobin's first album four years ago will know how refreshing music like this feels. **VS**

KRE 'Numb 04' (Numb)
The pre-release info says that this is '...5 tracks of uncompromising, fierce DJ tools...' and its not far wrong, providing five excellent stripped-down minimal techno cuts. Listening to all five just makes me want to dance - say no more! **M**

PRECISION CUTS 'Ubergirl' (Octagon)
Two top-quality mixes given here under the names of 'Smart Breaks' and 'Tokyo Nites'. Both stay strong to the breakbeat, with one mix dropping in some necessary heavy bass and the other taking more of an electro trip. Unlikely to become classics, but in the here and now these are essential cuts that will help to keep your set varied and dance-floor expectant. **B**

BEN LONG 'Kingdom' (Potential)
This latest EP on Space DJ Ben Long's own imprint comes as a slight disappointment from someone quite capable of so much more (potential). The A1 cut 'Kingdom' will no doubt shift dance-floors and find plenty of deck play, but ultimately sees Mr Long exploring little new terrain, whilst the tracks on the B side clearly lack both the dance dynamics and new-sprung direction so brilliantly exhibited in the label's earlier output. Not his best by any means. **VS**

CHRIS LIEBING & UMEK 'Downtime EP' (Primate)
Much of the same looped-style grinders you've come to expect from the Primate stable, but then again, when 'much of the same' equals well produced, dance-floor friendly techno from two of Europe's most respected producers, there's little really to complain about! The deeper sounding 'Deng' is the track to head for, but all are worth checking and sure to do damage in the right hands. **M**

SOUL WATCHER 'Battery EP' (Primevil)
Another worthy release from Belgium's Marco Bailey, this time teamed with fellow production maestro Redhead. Three tough building cuts ideal for keeping a crowd in motion during those late night sessions. The funkier title track will probably enjoy the best dance-floor reaction due to the crisp, driving nature of the percussion, but none are without merit. **M**

GLEN WILSON & MIKE HUMPHRIES 'Punish 5' (Punish)
Dark n' gritty 3-tracker from Wilson and Humphries, adopting Punish's familiar raw drummatic manifesto. All are underpinned by menacing tones and contorted vocals, with B1 biting the hardest and likely to see frequent floor play among harder techno jocks. **VS**

COLD DUST 'Snake Pit' (Red Seal)
Red Seal hits double figures with this fine two-track release. The A side is an excellent funky filtered techno cut, but it's the B side that really stands out with its insistent drum loop that builds and falls, accompanied by a wicked synth stab that moves the track on to a higher level of intensity. Guaranteed dancefloor action. **M**

DJ DASH 'Board Games' (Rampe D)
Second release for Berlin's Rampe D label, this time by Tresor's DJ Dash. Three invigorating tracks of slow, building techno - ideal for warm up slots or crowds who like it deep. For me B1 is the best offering, a drawn out, evolving cut with lush with mighty crisp drum patterns. One for the head as well as the feet. **M**

>RECOMMENDED<
BOGDAN RACZYNSKI 'Ibiza Anthems Vol.4' (Rephlex)
'I'm as shit as you are, but I'm more than happy to admit it, all the while dressed in my 1000 quid custom-tailored Italian gay-goat suit with matching faggot cow shoes'. You can't help but love Bogdan Raczynski, ever since last year's 'Samurai Math Beats' long-player showed what should or shouldn't be possible with a little technology and a lorra, lorra number crunchin'. 'Ibiza Anthems Vol.4' is certainly a fine way to purge the few grievances he clearly holds against modern lifestyle marketing, with tracks such as 'Bombs Over Ibiza', 'Trance and Burn' and 'Ibiza TM' fusing what is almost electro and jazz with his drill-core pneumatics and savage bleep beats. There is no doubt that some clueless clone somewhere will acquire this drill 'n bass bonanza under false pretences. I hope it fucks them up even more. Long live Raczynski. **VS**

>RECOMMENDED<
OVUCA 'King Stacey' (Rephlex)
Finnish recruit Alexsi 'Ovuca' Perala fits a fuck of a lot into twelve and a half minutes - his drum programming sounds like it's been compressed by nuclear fusion. Honestly, when I first listened to this 4-track EP, I could swear it was a 45-minute album. Possibly the most clattering in-yer-face breakbeat attitude I've heard in years, yet hilariously light-hearted to boot. This is ultra brutal death jungle / drill 'n bass welded to quasi-Nintendo melodies at its very finest, and I'm sure it makes me work better, which is odd. Rephlex continue to rock, oh yes. **VS**

>RECOMMENDED<
AUBREY 'Stressed Squares' (Solid Groove)
The prolific Aubrey returns with another fine set

of deep techno grooves for dance floor application. 'Devil's Tongue' swings energetically in a Chi-town style, whilst 'Stressed Squares' takes a darker percussive slant weaving in some brain-bending tonal sweeps and fine displaced drum fills. The bonus track from Mark Ambrose is a fucking gem too. **VS**

VARIOUS ARTISTS 'Crawl EP' (Syl)
More top Spanish tracknology, with the Syl label bringing forth 4 deliciously crunchy samba-driven blasters for wreckin' the joint. A1 inparticular should cause serious booty shaking, infusing a more intelligent hypnotic warmth into all the hard-edged drum biznizz. **VS**

AURAL EMOTE 'Second Thought' (Symbolism)
Ben Sims goes head to head with Function's David Sumner on a split EP of liquid club grooves and highly useable locks. Sim's minimal main cut rocks the house as you have come to expect by now, although Sumner provides a meritorious cyclic contribution that won't disappoint those who have dug his top-notch Function output. One for the floor, as always. **VS**

>RECOMMENDED<
JOEY BELTRAM 'EP number one' (STX)
Surely set to be as popular as the now highly licensed STX001, Beltram delivers two more filter frenzies further exploring the tougher house territory he first encountered years ago with his seminal 'Play With the Voice' remix. 'The Verbs' (B1) punches along nicely sounding like a deeper Red Seal cut, but 'The Money' (A1) steals the show here heading straight for the jugular with the crunchy hand claps that worked so well last time, and even larger stabs, proving its not easy being cheesy. **HL**

QUAKER 'Berliner Sound EP' (Ungleich)
German duo Jorg and Kai treat open ears to a subdued 5-track foray into down-tempo house-o-matics and sparse twisted breaks 'n bass. Not as essential as Friedmann or the like, yet well worth checkin' if you like your electronix slow, deep and beat-driven. **VS**

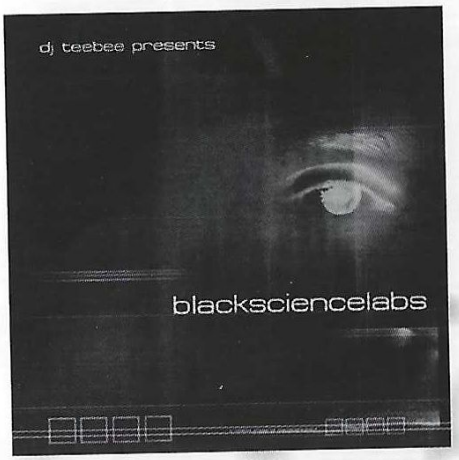
USER 'User 5A' (User)
Ultra-rhythmic 2-tracker from User's offshoot label. Each release in this sub-series has exuded an altogether deeper vibe, and this is no exception. However, 5A's B-side does sound naff compared to the awesome Purpose Makeresque groove on its flip, which is a shame really. **VS**

USER 'User 8' (User)
Limited edition red vinyl one-sider from User. Xtra cheeky sample theft but standard rocking material nonetheless. What more can I say, err, not much, apart from that one-siders are a wasteful concept, no matter how exclusive the track. Still, snap it up whilst you can. **VS**

ALBUMS

VARIOUS ARTISTS 'Escalator Records, Tokyo' (Bungalow)
As one of the very few truly independent Japanese labels left in existence, respect is due to Escalator Records. Ranging from the screwball floor-fillers of Montparnasse and the High Yummies' almost barnstorming quirkiness to the tender pop of Neil & Iraiza, this is an eclectic view of a highly respected maverick imprint and certainly not for those with blinkered musical vision. Concentrating on near impossible-to-find releases, this is a chance to own some extremely rare and expensive tracks. But with Yukari Fresh track named after Liverpool's 'Michael Owen' I was bound to like it anyway *(Pah! I hope you don't form too many opinions like that,* Ed*)*. **DS**

DJ TEE BEE 'DJ Teebee presents Black Science Labs' (Certificate 18)



Is Jungle music facing an identity crisis at the moment? It certainly seems that the genre has passed on from the classic scattering breaks and psychedelic melodies in favour of a more dance-floor friendly, dark two-step style. Whilst this makes for less innovation and multi-purpose listening, it does seem that Jungle has gained a popularity in the clubs that techno hasn't known for a long time. Teebee's debut album fits firmly into this mould. Breaks are kept to a minimal two-steppin' regime throughout, whilst sci-fi samples and horror movie atmospherics slide from left to right speaker. It might not be quite as ground-breaking as some of C18's material, but Teebee has infused a definite atmosphere of his own into these standardised sounds and it's dangerously engaging. Moody, melodic and sub-bass heavy, Black Science Labs will have you wiggling energetically despite a few generic tendencies. **PG**

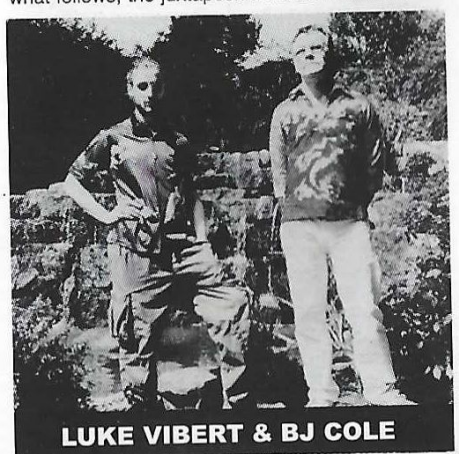
>RECOMMENDED<
PILOTE 'Antenna' (Certificate 18 / Electronic Projects)
This is a pure shot of excellence into the bloodstream of electronica. Coming from a Black Dog/Autechre/Boards of Canada angle, Pilote manages to out class all of these mainstay's recent output with a gorgeous combination of live & electronic instrument sounds, cheap equipment, quirky samples and uplifting harmonies. It's early days but I'd certainly say we have a classic here... everyone I've played this to, from all manner of music tastes, has raved over it. Perhaps the most accomplished thing about the album is that it truly works as an album. The flow of tracks and emotions takes you through a joyful adventure in nostalgia, humour, funk and studio trickery without EVER disappearing up its own asshole. You can only hope that the recognition that will come from this release will not spoil Pilote's vision of honest, emotional sounding music. Very, very promising. **PG**

>RECOMMENDED<
LUKE VIBERT & BJ COLE 'Stop the Panic' (Cooking Vinyl)
Ever since his first surreal forays on Rising High, Cornish breakbeat beatnik Luke Vibert has never been afraid to circumnavigate the seas of cheese. Unlike many exponents of experimental electronica who embrace all things twee purely for post-modern, indulgent or ironic impetus, Vibert creates consistently masterful fromage fusion without ever disappearing too far from the job in hand. This album is brilliant for the simple reason that no one else will ever make music quite like this. Having formed a poetic partnership with legendary pedal steel guitarist BJ Cole (session musician for every type of terrestrial artist from Cat Stevens to Shakin' Stevens) 'Stop the Panic' takes Vibert's complex programming ever further towards its illogical conclusion. Few producers could string together the words Hawaiian hip hop and country D 'n B without inducing some seriously queasy side effects, and although some will scoff at the bold buffoonery on display, this is one cracking album that is best appreciated within the spirit in which it was forged. They must grow some strong shit in Cornwall. **VS**

DZIHAN & KAMIEN 'Freaks & Icons' (Couch)
One of my favourite discoveries of recent years, Vienna's Couch Records have built a reputation around the small, but perfectly formed output of classically trained electronic maestros dZihan & Kamien. Tranquil melodies combine with rhythmic Eastern-influenced percussion and exquisitely laid-back production for a double album which tours the opium dens and vibrant markets of the 'Streets Of Istanbul', drops into 'Homebase' and spends some time with 'Just You & I' before basking in the thermal grooves of 'Ocean Air' and floating away on 'Spacewater'. Recorded in London, Vienna and Istanbul with a welter of highly respected session musicians, 'Freaks & Icons' perfectly captures its cosmopolitan inspirations and will take you on a magic carpet ride through contemporary fusion at it very best. Breathtaking. **DS**

THE OCTAGON MAN 'Ito Calculus' (DC)
J Saul Kane returns under his pioneering Octagon Man guise for the sequel to 1995's 'The Exciting World Of. . .' long-player. 'Ito Calculus' abandons trademark hip-hop breaks for sci-fi-tinged take on electronic experimentation. Broken beats mesh with twisted analogue on tracks such as '10ft Violins' and 'Mass' as electro influences suffuse the music with futuristic undertones. However, this 13-track long-player goes on to embrace both the rhythmic and the contemplative in the shape of 'Sound Of Gemini' and 'Codion' which twist and turn majestically through caustic beats and swirling analogue respectively. Continuously mixed, without breaks between the tracks, 'Ito Calculus' breaks boundaries a while remaining a cohesive collection, driven by pure self-styled innovation. **DS**

THE THIRD EYE FOUNDATION 'Little Lost Soul' (Domino)
TTEF might sound for all the world like a shadowy organisation that funds research into extra-sensory perception, but 'they' are in fact Matt Elliot, noted musical refusnik and contemporary of the likes of Techno Animal and Volume Versus Mass. 'Little Lost Soul' only boasts seven tracks but is none the worse for its brevity. 'I've Lost That Loving Feline' makes for a fine opener, ingeniously marrying what might be opera with drill'n'bass breakbeats and setting the pattern for what follows; the juxtaposition of conventional


LUKE VIBERT & BJ COLE

orchestral elements and unconventional beats, essentially. This could have resulted in a right old mess, but Elliot is way too smart to let that happen and despite the fact that he never takes the easy route, 'Little Lost Soul' is frequently affecting and often just plain beautiful. Clever git. **TMF**

DEAD PREZ 'Let's Get Free' (Epic)
This is the hip hop album of now. Forget Puffy, Biggie - forget nearly everything else in hip hop because Dead Prez brings us hip hop with a message, like it should. You can find hints of nihilistic politics in the street rhymes of people like Nas, Wu-Tang, Big L, etc, but real political awareness is right here on 'Let's Get Free'. Dead Prez set their militant agenda throughout the album with track titles such as 'Be Healthy', 'Discipline', 'Psychology', 'We Want Freedom', and 'Police State'. Track three 'They Schools', takes a stance on education - not that there is anything wrong with education, but rather about how values from the establishment enter our minds at school. The next track - the almighty single 'Hip Hop' is lyrically tight, with a killer bassline and video to boot. Dead Prez are not afraid to take on the mainstream hip hop that plagues the MTV generation. If you are fed up with witnessing the material side of hip hop via Westwood and MTV and want some reality back in the music, Dead Prez are without doubt just what Chuck D would have ordered. **B**

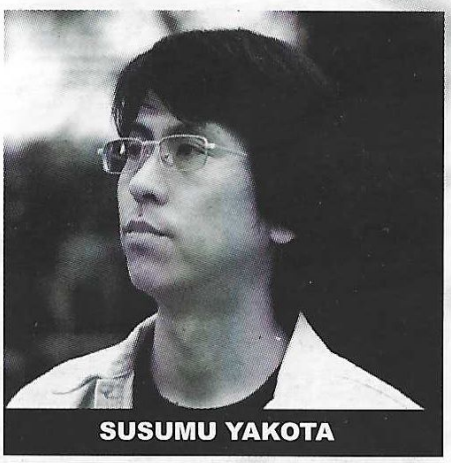
SNOG 'I Snog Therefore I am' (Hymen)
Purchased purely on the strength of the title this one could have been poor. But what seemed like a gamble came somewhat close to a jackpot, or at least three strawberries: EP price, album length, nice sleeve, excellent music. In this one record there's soul singers from cosmic alley, funked up techno for the lost schizophrenic, dark scapes from Pluto, urgent breakbeat invasions and LFO style sci-fi crunching. The real art here though is in the reappropriation of familiar samples; a small motif from Herbie Hancock's 'Raindance' forms the basis for a mellow slice of cyber-funk that make you feel like you're trapped on a spacestation in a time loop, but with a smile on your face. **RW**

PHYLR 'Half Life' (Invisible)
Unchecked ambition can be a dangerous thing in music. Former Cop Shoot Cop collaborator and film score merchant JF Coleman is Phylr (pronounced 'filler', presumably) and this is his sprawling first release. There's barely a musical genre into which 'Half Life' doesn't dip, swinging wildly as it does between film soundtracks, electro, drum'n'bass, atmospherics, hip-hop and more. This, and the fact that Coleman invited a host of his musical mates into the studio, almost inevitably results in a patchy, messy, uncohesive album that can't decide what it wants to be or where it wants to go. 'Half Life' has its moments, but they aren't half thin on the ground. TMF

GONZALES 'Gonzales Über Alles' (Kitty-Yo)
Berlin's Kitty-Yo continues to pursue its uncompromisingly eclectic vision, but with the corrupted grooves of Chilly Gonzales may have stumbled across its best release yet. Crushing together elements of hip-hop style, jazzual introspection, fractured funk and classical fluency with a pervasive air of marijuana psychosis, 'Gonzales Über lles' lets the listener into Chilly's slightly disturbing and chaotic mindset - and, for all its quirks, it is a place you won't want to leave in a hurry. From the sampled orchestrations of 'Real Motherf***in' Music' to the sweet rhythms of 'Let's Groove Again' and 'Past Your Bedtime', by way of the viral grooves of last year's singular 'The Worst MC', 'Gonzales Über Alles' signals the imminent rise to world domination of a major talent. Twisted pop genius. **DS**

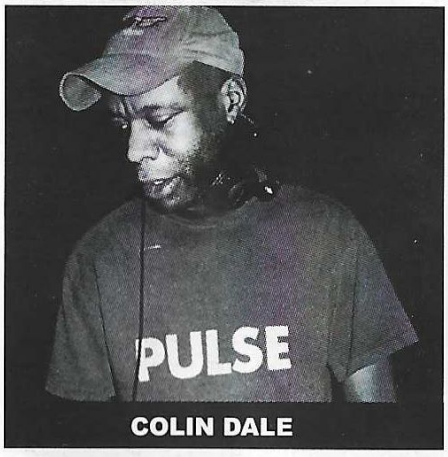
FILA BRAZILLIA 'Brazilification' (Kudos)
Fila Brazillia have made quite a name for themselves with their inimitable blend of pronounced percussion, sweeping analogue and inspired slick production. Over the years, the prolific partnership has built a massive CV, with six albums to their credit and a whole lot more remixes than you would reasonably be expected to count. And you don't have to any more, because they are all here, on 18-track double-CD compilation 'Brazilification'. From the liberating beats of DJ Food's 'Freedom' to Robin Jones' blistering Latin floor-filler 'Royal Rumba' and superb previously unreleased mixes of Radiohead's 'Climbing The Walls', UNKLE's 'Berry Meditation' and Moloko's 'Lotus Eaters' this is a value-for-money inventory of one of the consistently interesting remix teams going. A big thumbs-up. **DS**

>RECOMMENDED<
SUSUMU YOKOTA 'Magic Thread' (Leaf)


SUSUMU YAKOTA

For those who may be more familiar with Susumu Yokota's work on Sublime, 'Magic Thread' will be a valuable insight to the many musical facets of this Japanese genius. First released as a limited run of 500 copies on the artist's own Skintone imprint 'Magic Thread' ebbs and flows with fragile introspection, carried along on winds of spellbinding harmony that eerily transport the listener into Yokata's idosyncratic conceptual world as tracks such as 'Unravel', 'Fiber', 'Stitch' and 'Blend' warp into a fabric of luxuriant simplicity. Music which will possess both your heart and mind. **DS**

COLIN DALE 'Abstract Funk Theory' (Logic)



COLIN DALE

Voted 'Compilation of the Month' in February's Muzik, Colin Dale's selection of jazz and funk influenced tech-rhythms provides elegant modern fusion in the truest sense of the words. Moving sideways from Ian O'Brien's immaculately compiled first 'Abstract Funk Theory' album, Dale culls an exquisitely produced assortment of late night / early morning hedonism, creating a feel-good factor rather akin to the Ambient Dub compilations of the early Nineties. Igniting with mystical electro-fulled grooves from Scratch Massive and DJ Assassin, the album builds steadily through quirky 4/4 terrain by the likes of Kenny Larkin (remixed by Carl Craig), Kevin Yost and EBE. The mesmerising spell of crisp percussion, sprinkled jazz keys and sporadic guitar licks is only broken by Firefly's 'Supernatural' which appears far too brash to fit the context of the 'journey'. O'Brien himself returns with perhaps the most unique contribution, a dynamic melting pot of twisted tech-jazz guaranteed to stir your soul. Not quite as abstract as the title may suggest, but with some fine moments nonetheless. **VS**

SOFT VERGE 'Soft Verge' (Output)
Bizarre, but oddly impressive stuff from one Mike Silver, here on The Underdog's notably leftfield label. 'Molten Timbre' sets the tone, a 3 minute long barely audible one-note whine. The other six aren't quite as sparse but are more like soundscapes than actual tracks. Overall, the album is themed around (and here I quote the press release) "the story of a parasitic digi-disease, charting the progress of this strange virus from infection through the early symptoms to the frightening physical manifestations of the condition", which would account for track titles like 'Fever' and 'Delirium' anyway. Each cut involves only a few elements - 'Fever', for example, is omposed almost entirely of what sound like the intro beats on Grandmaster Flash's 'White Lines', repeated - but they're remarkably effective in conveying the mood. 'Soft Verge' may be the kind of thing that will prompt your Dad to ask 'Is this what passes for music these days?' but don't let that put you off. **TMF**

VARIOUS ARTISTS 'Rhythm & Grooves; An Essential Music Selection for the Soul' (Real Estate)
Since moving to Chicago from his native Detroit two years ago, DJ/producer Tim Baker has been making good progress in the windy city. His new compilation provides an immaculate amalgamation of Detroit futurism and Chicago soul by combining twelve rare house grooves from both influential cities. Following on from last year's remarkable 'Chicago: 1999' on Real Estate, 'Rhythms...' enlists some of Chicago's finest filter merchants such as Stacy Kidd, Gene Hunt and Tyree Cooper, yet it's Baker's own future throbber 'Feelings of Funk' that is perhaps the most essential of all. Particularly classy contributions include works from hotly-tipped DJ Jacq and also Phoenix, who, I believe is actually Baker's girlfriend. I await a 'his-and-hers' collaboration with great anticipation. **VS**

WEVIE STONDER 'Eat Your Own Ears' (Skam)
Another case of the title influencing the decision to purchase although being on Skam often serves to recommend. But never before has Skam sounded like this. Known mainly for their sonorous and crunchy electronica this couldn't be further from the label's usual canon, and it's brilliant; an album full of ridiculous songs about chimps, barge dogs and building your own house. Inside the sleeve: a leaflet about a mission to grow long nails. A must. **RW**

SILICONE SOUL 'A Soul Thing' (Soma)
Sparkling stuff from Scotland's premier voodoo bandits of house, Craig Morrison and Graeme Reedie. Presenting itself as a kind of Drop Music

meets Roule on a synthetic jaunt to jazz-house central, 'A Soul Thing' has some very, very fine moments. Tight conga fills give vibrant life to the stripped-down beats, whilst urgent dubby basslines give darkness, depth and drive where it's most needed. This wonderfully produced debut album from Glasgow's fast-rising duo nestles comfortably into Soma's legendary house-tech territory, and deserves to find strong following both in the mainstream and the undercurrent. Soul music for movers and groovers. **VS**

SYMPTOMS 'Symptoms' (Swim)
23-year old Klaus Ammitzboll makes his debut album release on the rather divergent (it would be an insult to term it 'eclectic') Swim label. Composed and recorded in his bedroom using little more than a desktop PC with a slightly defective soundcard costing less that one-hundred quid, a guitar and an amp, this is emotive stuff that doesn't sound nearly as lo-fi as your common sense would lead you to believe. His fifty minutes of subdued tonal washes blended with electric beats 'n freqs and poignant guitar-manship gels into one big bubbling psychedelic soup with an inherently strange yet more-ish aftertaste. If anything, you are left knowing that more equipment would draw away from the primitive appeal of Ammitzboll's seductive sleepy vibe. If you've missed the aesthetic guitar imagery of Eighties experimenters Sonic Youth, Spacemen 3, Mercury Rev and the like, Symptoms might offer you a timely cure. **VS**

>RECOMMENDED<
JURYMAN 'The Hill' (SSR/Crammed Discs)
Ex-Sandal Ian Simmonds has certainly found his feet. 'The Hill', Juryman's second long-player, continues where the previous 'Mail Order Justice' left off and is a delight for those who like their jazz taut and electronic. Combining crisp breaks and deep cinematic instrumentation, Simmonds makes music that addresses every shade of human emotion. However, it is when vocals are welded to the compositions that 'The Hill' truly comes alive. Alison Goldfrapp's improvisations add a languid texture to 'The Morning', 'To Sleep' and 'The Moot', while Trinidad poet Roger Robinson fills 'The Pilot' with unnamed dread. A complex, sophisticated album sure to be bracketed alongside such other contemporary masterpieces as Innerzone Orchestra's 'Programmed'. **DS**

SMITH AND MIGHTY 'Big World Small World' (Stud!o K7)
Bristol's Smith and Mighty cement their relationship with Stud!o K7 by producing perhaps their finest work yet. 'Big World Small World' is an epic trip through the many shades of dub-infused rhythms that the prolific pair excel in. From the low-slung harmonies of 'Move You Run', the drum'n'bass-rooted filtered feints of 'No Justice' to the faithful funk of 'Believers' this album drifts along on a tide of heavenly production, rumbling sub-bass grooves and taut percussion. However, vocals supplied by the likes of Tammy Payne, Alice Perera and LD add an extra passionate dimension to the compositions, particularly in the heartbreaking balladry of 'Rescue Me Pt III'. An essential release. **DS**

STEREO MCs 'DJ Kicks' (Stud!o K7)
K7's DJ Kicks series has brought some of the most varied and inspirational mix compilations of recent years to public ears with the likes of Kruder & Dorfmeister, Smith & Mighty, Kemistry (RIP) & Storm and Kid Loco's recent downbeat downpour. And they continue the tradition with a fine collection of cuts from the Stereo MCs. Although things have been quiet for the duo - they haven't released an LP for seven years - they haven't lost touch with quality music. Rob and The Head tear through old-school and contemporary classics such Ultamagnetic MCs' perrennial 'Poppa Large', DJ Polo's 'Road to the riches', Sofa Surfers' 'Beans & Rice', The Funky Lowlives' 'Latazz' and their own exclusive new tracks with earthy mixing and rough cuts which, far from being irritating, add an vibrant live feel to the selection and show a genuine no-nonsense enthusiasm for quality sounds. We've all had great lazy days playing records with our mates and this really is no different. That's the beauty of it. **DS**

TOSCA 'Suzuki' (Stud!o K7)
Following on from 1997's sumptuous debut album 'Opera', Richard Dorfmeister and Rupert Huber's Tosca have taken a meditative, contemplative turn with their second long-player 'Suzuki'. As you will have come to expect from this duo, their music is beautifully centred, pivoting around langorous rhythms and sparkling instrumentation from the sweetly dripping 'Honey' to 'Ocean Beat's breezy breaks. But it is not all bleary-eyed ambience, as dense dubwise bass and crisp percussion fuse to produce an abundant sound, teeming with blissfull jazz-inflected harmony on tracks such as 'Bass On The Boat' and the subtly uplifting 'Busenfreund'. A luscious collection of music for the urban Zen master. **DS**

SOUL DESTROYERS 'Destroyed' (Synewave)

Their records are hardly an unknown quantity, but few artists are as consistently firin' as The Advent. In any case, Cisco Ferreira's new double-pack on Synewave contains enough twists and turns to warrant box space from all those who like their techno pacey and hard-hitting. Both slabs have a very 'live' feel, with tracks like 'Connexions' and 'Cult Controller' both as reliable a peak-time pace-keeper as you ever gonna get. The inclusion of the previously released 'Nubian Day' is also something of a bonus. **VS**

PACOU 'State of Mind' (Tresor)
Since taking up residency at Tresor's legendary Berlin club in 1995 Pacou's hypnotic minimal sound has undergone constant evolution. His third album takes a more direct dancefloor approach than previous LP releases, yet openly lends itself to both home and club appreciation. Pacou's trademark production skills achieve incredibly organic-sounding compositions by loosely interweaving harsh-edged percussion with soft tones and insistent stabs to create an almost orchestral sense of depth. Driving dancefloor cuts such as 'Fuel' and 'Iron City' give strong DJ appeal to the package whilst the deftly structured track listing makes 'State of Mind' undoubtedly his most accomplished work to date. True machine music. **VS**

CHECK OVERLOAD ONLINE FOR AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH PACOU

TURBO STUDIO SESSIONS 'Vol. 1' (Turbo)
A quality deep techno compilation that doesn't rely on a big name DJ or crappy theme for its reason to exist. In fact, there's no indication who selected the trax for inclusion, but they sure have an ear for it. From established classic like Isolee's 'Beau Mot Plage' (DJ Q remix) and Blaze's 'Lovelee Dae' (Isolee mix) to recent killers like Swayzak Vs Theorem's 'Bad Hair Day' and a host of little known but top notch others, this collection bears the mark of someone who knows his/her shit alright. Check www.turborecords.ca if you have trouble tracking it down. **TMF**

RUXPIN 'Radio' (Uni:form)

Christ, the radio stations in Iceland must be pretty adventurous if this is the kind of thing they play. At just 18 years old, Jonas Thor Gudmundsson is a mere slip of a lad, but he's already mastered the art of marrying electronic breakbeats to glacial, ice-cool (sorry) washes and chords. Trouble is, on the strength of 'Radio' anyway, that's about all he's mastered and really it ain't enough to make for a full-length album. There's much here to be applauded and there's nothing you could actually point to as bad, but it is a case of stretching one trick too far. An album to be dipped into, then, if anything. **TMF**

NOCTURNAL PRESENTS: 'All Clubbed Out; The Ambient Chill Album Volume 1' (UV)
Contender for perhaps the worst album title to be born of the new millennium so far, this hour-long CD not only suffers a bit of an identity crisis but also contains some of the most abhorrent track names to ever see the light of day. Titles such as 'Visit your Dreams', 'Trance Brigade', 'Spirits Sleepwalking' and 'Rain Spots on the Beach' bring bile straight to the top of the windpipe. No doubt this album will find appropriate application among a few fresh-faced clubbers who will relish a medley of pan pipes, pianos, the odd breakbeat and the omnipresent sound of rain, but for material of this ilk the past fifteen years has much, much more to offer. Go and borrow some early Irresistible Force records, or better still, seek out some good modern ambience and try listening to it when you're not completely off your swede. **VS**

FOR FURTHER REVIEWS AND UPDATES CHECK OVERLOAD ONLINE @ www.overloadmedia.co.uk

ARC (ANE) (London)
From the leafy London suburbs of Ealing, the mysterious Maxwell Duley launches ARC (ANE), sister label to his Arc imprint, whose twisted rhythmic soundscapes delighted many a progressive club jock last year. Duley's new project plans to "push deeper sounds to the fore" with the first release 'Elegant Manoeuvres' by Max Duley (which, just to confuse matters further is itself a sub-project within Arc(cane) hitting the shops around about... now.

For info, contact Max Duley at: max@arcrecords.freeserve.co.uk

BEAT (EN) COMMUNICATION (Bristol)
BEAT(EN) COMMUNICATIONS is one of many new labels to surface from Bristol's prosperous underground scene. Spawned from the depths of renowned record boutique / milkshake bar 'Eat the Beat', the purveyors of this frothy new label describe their sound as 'one of the most quirky and infectious groove operations to emerge from the murky underbelly of house'. Initial releases 'Big Robot' and 'Fudge' by Huddersfield's Jim Birchell (aka Los Vampiros Lesbos) exude "smoky funk reminiscent of smog nestling gently in the cleft of a moist valley." Their words not mine, I can assure you.
Tel/Fax: 0117 925 1691.

OUR RECORDS (Leicester)
With DiY and Drop Music swamping playlists across the globe, the Midland counties boast a potent pedigree for deep house productivity. OUR RECORDS is a new project combining the creativity of owners Iain Macpherson (20/20 Vision), Toby Sutton (Junction 21), Damien Bailey (20/20 Vision) and Markus Booth (Babble). Describing the label's style as "deep jazzy house, sided with tough tracky shit", their first self-produced EP (backed by remixes from DiY's Digs and Whoosh) is scheduled for release in September 2000. All tracks are recorded at Thrash Tango Studio located in deepest Leicester. The label says they are always on the look out for more deeeep tracks.
Tel: 07970 551 352
Fax: 0116 251 5816
Email: ourrecords@aol.com

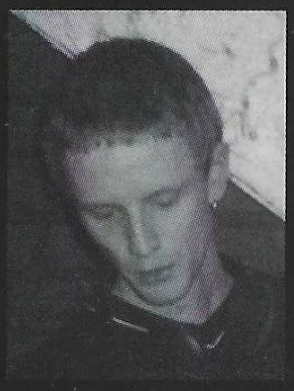
RODZ-KONEZ (London)
It seems like the Ealing invasion is now well and truly set in stone. With the rise in popularity of labels such as Meta, Arc and Figment, the likes of Max Duley, Andrew Mclauchlan and Oliver Ho are cutting up clubs with their innovative take on modern club techno. Rumour has it even the great Marco Carola has moved there! Enter RODZ-KONEZ's main man, Makaton aka Steve Bailey, a 26 year-old originally from Birmingham, now well and truly in the thick of the west London soup. Described as superbly tough and mix friendly, the fractured, post Detroit sounds of his first 'Active Line EP' give a good initiation into his forthcoming output.
Email: rodzkonez@aol.com

SHIMMY RECORDINGS (Bristol)
SHIMMY Recordings After five years of sweaty West Country club forays, Bristol's Shimmy crew take their up-front techno sound on to vinyl with the inaugural installment of SHIMMY RECORDINGS. This first release, a collaborative production by resident Simmer and Strange Fruit's Haze promises fast percussive dancefloor fodder from two of Bristol's most illustrious residents. Since his first release on Problem Child Records back in '97, Simmer has been busy in the studio with other Bristol activists, such as Luge, John Askew, Dave P. and Wired. A launch tour is planned in the coming months to spread the label's sound across the nation's club circuit.
Tel/Fax: Simmer on 0117 908 5964.

WAREHOUSE (Bristol)
Another fledgling Bristol-based project is WAREHOUSE - fifth in-house label for newly formed Compound Distribution. Mid-paced toker's techno seems the order of the day, with EPs apparently to be packaged using hemp centre labels, inner paper bags and card sleeve (nice!). Four releases are ready rolled with Loto, Jim P, John Benj and the DJ Producer all getting their skins out in the studio. Expect plenty of pounding techno from banging loops through to dubby chuggers, all pressed on to ten-inch vinyl for that extra special touch.
Tel/Fax: 0117 903 0580.

YAKIMA (Manchester)
Drawing influence from soul, funk, blues, Chicago house, Detroit techno and electro, Manchester's YAKIMA label has built up a solid artist roster from numerous (currently) unknown UK producers. With three releases ready to go, and a plan to make release one a month, Yakima say they are fully set to defy "the current trend of soul destroying techno". Appetites can be whetted via their funky new web site (www.yakima.co.uk), where three of the label's tracks are showcased, alongside further details about Yakima artists. Their first release, 'Camberwell Beauties EP' by Laszlo Beckett is due out by the end of April. A launch tour is also planned.
Tel/Fax: 0161 226 3816
Email: yakima77@hotmail.com

ONE TO WATCH
DEZ WILLIAMS



If all clichés are to be believed North Wales offers nothing other than slate, sheep shagging and damp mountainous terrain for bearded backpackers. "Almost, but not quite", claims 23-year old Dez Williams, whose toughened Welsh electronica is single-handedly leading Holyhead's pocket of resistance away from the torrent of commercial bilge flooding the local night spots. "Most people in the area are very, very narrow-minded" he sighs, "they don't understand electronic music without vocals in." Not that this deters him from producing an average of four to twelve tracks each week, spanning right across the spectrum of techno, electro, ambient, dub and D & B.

Having lived in Wales all his life, Dez has been accumulating studio equipment ever since acquiring his first pair of decks at the tender age of 15. Spurred on by a loyal following of local friends, he finally got a break last year when his blissfully sublime track 'Puppet World' track was put out on Ben Sim's Theory sub-label 'Native'. Even though the other three cuts on the record (all by established London producers) provided stiff competition he received some excellent feedback with many magazine reviews pointing towards the strength of his contribution.

He confesses difficulty in keeping up with the frontiers of musical progression, with no cutting edge vinyl emporiums for miles around to provide new inspiration. A monthly residency at the Music Box in Manchester has certainly helped to increase his tonal vocabulary, although he admits the slot is pushing him further in a four-to-the floor direction. He mentions current leaders like Oliver Ho, Luke Slater, Surgeon and Ben Sims as his contemporary influences, although to a large extent it is his nostalgic Nineties sound influenced by older material that gives Dez Williams such a raw home grown appeal.

Holyhead will never be a musical Mecca for future generations, but Dez's tale stands as a proud example of all those who do their own thing in country backwaters across the land for the simple reason that they must. A local bouncer once threatened him with violence and instructed him "not to play music like that around here." Long live freedom of expression.

>For further info Contact Dez on 01407 763 282 / 07788 622 113.

"The Notron is in a class of its own, it combines linear sequence structures with a totally intuitive feeling of manipulation. One can deconstruct and completely redefine the context of the patterns, the only hurdle in using this machine is your own creativity. It came from someone who had no idea what its impact would be, who had no idea that what they were creating was so important. I truly think it has the same significance as the 909 and 303, probably more."
>Oliver Ho (Meta / Blueprint Records)

notron

WORDS
>ED TWIST

Anyone with little more than a passing interest in dance music will be aware of the influential Roland 303 and 909. These machines revolutionised popular music and changed the world. Gerrard Campbell, the chap who invented the Notron sequencer, like the creators of the original Roland bassline generator and drum machines, hadn't even heard of techno when he came up with the idea for his machine. To paraphrase William Gibson: the street finds its own use for things.

The Notron is an innovative four-track sequencer and midi-controlling interface. It is the most interactive, functional and fun piece of kit I have ever had the pleasure of playing with. It works on the same basic step sequencer principles as the first drum machines and according to the Notron web site "was devised to allow anyone, even people who don't have years to master musical instrument playing skills, to manipulate sounds in ways that defy normal expectations." Daniel Duffel, DJ magazine's digital technology reviewer, in one of the very few reviews of the Notron, said of the unit: "Its so user friendly it's absurd. It's easy to execute ideas and can give you inspiration in barren idea-less moments. It will valiantly stop you sounding shit and boring and help you to explore the evolving tangle of beats that is tomorrows music."

For a machine that is causing such a stir, with word spreading like a virus across the globe, it has received surprisingly little media attention. Especially when you consider that it gained Millennium product status and will soon be installed in the Digital Technology Wing of the Science Museum. In an age where DJ / dance music orientated equipment is one of the music industry's increasingly lucrative growth economies with all-you-need-to-make-dance-music-in-one-box machines and classic kit clones saturating the market, it is refreshing to discover a machine that was not made to satisfy a ready-made market but was simply a result of one individual's pure, unadulterated, innovative vision. Quite simply, Gerrard Campbell was becoming increasingly frustrated at the limitations of his sequencing equipment and decided to build something that allowed him to overcome these problems. As he admitted during the following interview: "In an ideal world I would have made only one and only I would have it."

O: The Notron is being used by most of the influential people in techno, but you hadn't heard techno before you invented your machine. Is that correct?
GC: Yes, absolutely true. I wasn't even aware of techno - I didn't go out or anything. Early dance music had completely turned me off. I thought it was absolute unbelievable shite. I'm from a grebo-rock-type background and I'd come up against a brick wall composing on the guitar - I had extremely limited skills. It's an insult to real musicians to call me a musician. I've always been interested in noises - I'd call myself a 'noisician'. I'd used a lot of sequencing equipment in the past but became really weary of the limitations. I thought there were only about two good tunes in all the dance music out there. I've always been interested in stripped down minimal stuff - like the middle bit of disco music where it just goes on and on and on.

O: When did you first come across techno?
GC: We'd been making the Notron for a little while and I was in Leeds one night in 1997. I heard these strange noises coming from this small club. Mike Humphries [aka H of Red Seal records] was Djing. 'Bloody hell, what's this music?', I asked him. It was techno. I always liked music with as fewer notes as possible but this was even better because it had no notes, just pure texture. I knew that the Notron would be fantastic for doing this kind of music because it's regimented but gloopy at the same time. I told him about the Notron. The rest is history.

O: Have you followed the music since?
GC: Oh yes - it's virtually all I listen to. It amazes me that something as machine-like as techno can have so much soul. When I hear really pounding stuff that excites me, it's almost as if the machine is dictating what should happen. Techno is pretty dumb really, but somehow it isn't. I now think good music is still possible, whereas before I didn't think it was. When I had the idea for the Notron I thought 'Oh, I'll be able to do some nice ambient stuff with this'. That was the very first thing I did with it just to prove the principle.

O: So, whose been using it?
GC: Some people are very cagey about admitting they use one - but I'd be exactly the same if I had a killer weapon. I've come across that stance a few times. [He lists users...] Claude Young, Kirk De Georgio, Mark Bell, Bjork, James Ruskin, Cisco from the Advent, Oliver Ho, Howie B, Max Duley, Richie Hawtin - he suggested the Beat Creep feature (a mixture of shuffle and groove). It's an ongoing thing - people suggest improvements and I try to incorporate them. Midi Kill came from using a broken midi lead - it kept stuttering and I though it sounded fantastic. I have about 160 features that are yet to be implemented. Bjork asked me to make an add-on that would follow the pitch of her voice. I flew out to Iceland and ended up making a one-off 'Bjorkeyboard'.

O: What is the story with the Millennium Dome?
GC: We got 'Millennium Product Status' with the original design of the machine. We received this little chrome placard saying 'Notron - Millennium Product' - it's on the wall at the office... We got some publicity off that through the DTI, and the Science Museum wanted it in their digital technology wing. In the end the Dome said, "Well if you haven't heard by now then you're probably not going to be featured in the Dome." They then rang up and said "Well you can be on the spiral of innovation - this thing outside the Dome - it'll cost you two thousand quid." What! - You can be a Millennium product and pay two grand to be associated with it by a little picture on the outside as people walk in. Inside, if you're not in with McDonalds and Ford you've not got a chance. It's absolutely fucking shocking. It's supposed to be a celebration of interesting things - what's the point? If McDonalds and Ford are producing anything interesting then my cock's a cuckoo!

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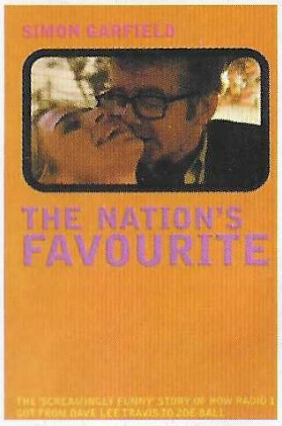
FURTHER READING



'The Nation's Favourite' by Simon Garfield Faber & Faber 1998 ISBN 0-571-19735-3 319pp

'The Nation's Favourite' is a collection of eyewitness accounts of Radio 1's transition from the Smashy & Nicey days of old (well, 1992) to the right-on bastion of cool it had become by the end of the decade. Almost all the text consists of quotes from leading names connected with the station, ranging from the then-BBC controller John Birt through a host of producers, staff and DJs to various tabloid journalists and even the odd celebrity, such as Harry Enfield and, er, Francis Rossi of the popular beat combo Status Quo, while Garfield confines himself to a few self-penned link passages for the sake of context and continuity.

The book begins by outlining the station's early years and painting a picture of how Old Radio 1 used to be. This section provides some fine quotes - "Most of the DJs detested each other. Bates hated Wright because Wright was a threat. Wright hated Bates because Bates was a threat. They both hated DLT" - and some wonderful anecdotes, particularly from John Peel; "Kid Jensen, Paul Burnett and myself went down and waited in the underground car park at the BBC for the opportunity to beat up Simon Bates." But despite the apparent ill-feeling between DJs, the overall impression of the first twenty-five years of Radio 1's life is one of a strange kind of innocence: a dusty old station run by fusty old BBC men and inhabited by cuddly, faintly ridiculous presenters, a bygone world of Our Tune and radio snooker. When Matthew Bannister took over as controller in 1993, the point at which the real meat of the book begins, he launched an attempt to remould the station with a more professional, up-to-date approach and, crucially, a new identity. It is New Radio 1's subsequent struggle to define and establish this identity (and regain some of its listeners in the process) which emerges as the dominant theme of 'The Nation's Favourite'.

Along the way, the innocence of old is steadily lost, to be replaced with a more efficient machine. From 1993 onwards, all that seems to have mattered at Radio 1 was listening figures, public relations and celebrities (reflecting the priorities of the wider media in this period). Concentrating almost exclusively on the five or so prime daytime shows, particularly the flagship breakfast show, each and every episode in the 1993-98 period is related in great detail - the crash in listening figures that followed Bannisters' changes, the hiring and firing of Chris Evans and Danny Baker, various stabs at the breakfast show by Evans, Mark & Lard (bizarrely, it was Princess Diana's death which put the final nail in their particular coffin), Kevin Greening and Zoe Ball, the recruitment of 'saviour' Chris Moyles, the constant battles with the press and so on. As the story unwinds, it becomes centred around fewer and fewer individuals and in the end, it becomes all too clear that, as far as its management are concerned, Radio 1's identity is based on a small handful of celebrity presenters, with music policy trailing some distance behind.

Although therefore possibly depressing for music fans, 'The Nation's Favourite' is at the same time a compelling read for anyone with even the vaguest interest in the subject, owing much to the fact that the story is told as it happened by those who were there, in their own words. This adds a dimension which a more conventional approach might have lacked. Beyond the detail of the story itself, it is the clash of personalities and egos which makes 'The Nation's Favourite' so richly entertaining from start to finish.

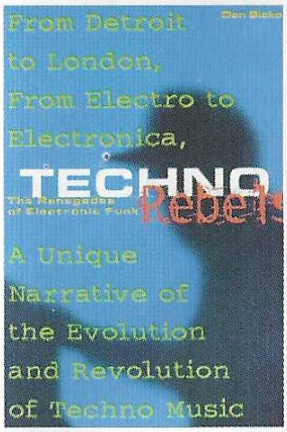
WORDS>ROB THOMAS

'Techno Rebels: The Renegades Of Electronic Funk' by Dan Sicko Billboard 1999 ISBN 0-8230-8428-0 240pp

'Techno Rebels' represents the first concerted attempt to relate the history of techno music, a task author Dan Sicko, a Detroit native, is well qualified to undertake having long been one of the most prominent American writers on the subject. Yet as Sicko points out early on, 'Techno Rebels' is not meant to be a complete history of electronic music, neither should it be seen as some kind of definitive last word on techno. Instead, Sicko intends that the book should "begin the discussion and definition of the genre" and hopes that the book "will allow for a myriad of personal interpretations."

'Techno Rebels' begins with a brief discussion of the rise in popularity of 'electronica' amongst US audiences in recent years and points out that most of the music's 'new' fans are blissfully unaware that the music they had found actually originated in their own country, believing instead that it was a European import. One suspects that, more than anything, this misconception was the primary impetus for 'Techno Rebels' and that if there is an intended audience for the book, it is these new young ravers of America. Inevitably then, the first part of 'Techno Rebels' concerns techno's birth and development in Detroit. He sets the scene by describing the growth of the city's early eighties underground party scene, the role of key DJs like Ken Collier, Electrifyin' Mojo and Jeff 'The Wizard' Mills, the urban decay of the city itself and the uniquely broad pallet of music those within its boundaries were exposed to. From the first releases by A Number Of Names and Cybotron and the emergence of the 'Belleville Three' through to the release of Network's crucial early compilations and the music industry's brief love affair with techno, you won't find a better rendition of the story of Detroit's 'first wave'.

Sicko is equally as strong on the city's so-called 'second wave', identifying and discussing key players like as Plus 8 and UR in detail, as well as again bringing the infrastructure behind the music into focus, like the Archer Pressing Plant, Submerge and the National Sound Corporation mastering lab. Yet as the book's emphasis shifts from Detroit to a global perspective, a more generalist approach is adopted. The



contributions of whole nations are summarised in a few paragraphs and Sicko tends to focus on just one or two key labels or producers in each case. This is understandable - he'd need at least another thousand pages to play with to attempt anything more completist - but it does mean that the impression is given that techno's virus-like global dissemination is down to a few individuals.

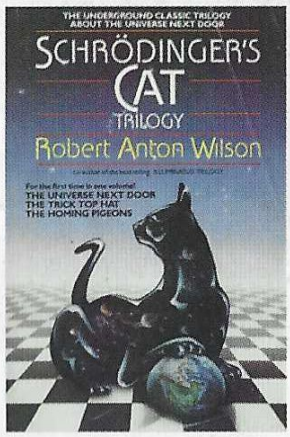
The section on Europe is particularly open to criticism. For example, Germany's contribution is woefully understated, despite the fact that it has been the backbone of the global techno scene for years now. Certain vital labels and producers, like R&S and the Aphex Twin, do not receive the acknowledgments they deserve. Others like, erm, T99 and Black Box are deemed important enough to warrant discussion. Moreover, there's little discussion of techno's bastard offspring, such as gabber and trance. Yet if this book has a single overriding fault, it is that too often Sicko fails to make connections or carry his themes through boldly enough. He rightly describes minimalism's original impetus as an attempt to find the lost funk in techno, but fails to point out that the hordes of minimal loop records that followed have been techno's undoing and are probably responsible for any current difficulties. He identifies commercially successful groups like 808 State, The Prodigy and Underworld but fails to underline that their success came only by adopting the kind of rock'n'roll trappings many of the music's originators were trying to get away from in the first place. And while he discusses genres like drum'n'bass, ambient and post-rock, he cannot pin down their relationship with techno. All the same, these are just personal observations, probably the kind of thing Sicko intended to generate in the first place. With such a vast subject, generalisations or omissions are inevitable and everybody with an interest in the subject is bound to find something here to take issue with - if the music didn't inspire debate and strong feelings it probably wouldn't be worth listening to anyway. What's more, as I've already pointed out, 'Techno Rebels' is not meant to be an encyclopaedia or a definitive history, simply because such a work could probably never be completed.

At the end of the day, 'Techno Rebels' is a very readable and largely insightful book, one that provides a wealth of factual detail, particularly when dealing with techno's Detroit beginnings, but manages not to squeeze out the romantic aspects of the story, despite Sicko's relatively straightforward prose style. Long overdue, 'Techno Rebels' tells a story that needs to be told. Let's just hope people are listening.

WORDS>TOM MAGIC FEET

>CONTEMPORARY CLASSIC<
'Schrodinger's Cat Trilogy'
by Robert Anton Wilson
A Dell Trade Paperback 1979/1988
ISBN 0-440-50070-2, 805pp

The ageing American oddity known as Robert Anton Wilson is perhaps best known for the 'Illuminatus' trilogy which he co-wrote with Robert Shea in the mid 1970's. This book, a vast compendium of conspiracy theories old and new, displayed excellent underground credentials and later achieved commercial success. However, despite Illuminatus' status as prime review tackle, his lesser known work from 1979 - the 'Schrodingers Cat' trilogy is in our (my) opinion shorter, funnier, less dense, more readable and ultimately much more satisfying than 'Illuminatus'.



The trilogy consists of three books (!) - Part One 'The Universe Next Door', Part One 'The Trick Top Hat', and Part One 'The Homing Pigeons'. This unusual literary demarcation is here for a reason - this is not a linear novel. Unlike most books the events do not unfold slowly and logically over the 500+ pages. Instead we are witness to (according to Wilson) the world's first quantum novel, in which the story or rather sequence of events takes place in a number of parallel universes, some like our own, some very different. Each of these universes are populated by a cast of characters who we encounter in similar situations throughout the book, only sometimes they aren't quite feeling themselves. For example, in the opening chapters we observe Benny 'Eggs' Benedict, popular columnist for a New York daily newspaper, sat working at his typewriter. A sample of Benny's work reveals him to be a paranoid and pessimistic fellow and it soon becomes apparent that his gloomy outlook on life is due in part to the death of his mother at the hands of a mugger. 200 pages pass and Benny is sat before his Mac seemingly much more at ease. This time his column is a sublime piece of Zen Haiku. After completing his work Benny decides to visit his mother, even though the old lady had been a bit neurotic ever since she was 'knocked on her ass by a purse snatcher'. 200 pages later and we (re)join Bonita 'Bonny' Benedict, columnist for a New York newspaper, busy at her typewriter. Her mother is not mentioned. And thus the style of the book... It would be wrong to say that the whole book is completely non-linear. There is still a trace of slow revelation and a definite story does unfold - it's just that the multitude of cops, robbers, drug barons, and political activists frequently change sex, occupation, and general relevance to the overall picture. The only consistent character appears to be Dr. Dashwood over at Orgasm Research, who desperately tries to remain the impassive scientist as he watches his machinery research the lovely Rhoda Chief with a variety of attachments.

While we observe this legion of polymorphous protagonists stumbling around the planet Wilson frequently digresses into fascinating asides concerning, among other things, psychology, sociology, anthropology, economics, and er... quantum physics. But don't let that put you off, this is not 'A Brief History of Time'. Wilson leaves out the complicated equations and gets straight to the conclusions of quantum theory, which have much more relevance to daily life than you may at first suppose. According to partner in crime Robert Shea, Wilson speaks 'for that tiny but indispensable minority who are changing our world by changing the way we think about it'. In short, this book is designed to give the reader a new perspective on, firstly, the 'hackneyed novel' and, secondly and slightly more ambitiously, the whole of objective reality. However, we are not talking 'change my life dawning of a new era' type shit (like The Raw Food Diet) but rather a calm discussion of human evolution welded to a sci-fi crime flick. I enjoyed it and maybe you might too.

WORDS>DISCORD

BLESSED ARE THE CHEESEMAKERS

Prolific and somewhat iconic West Country producer Luke Vibert gets even more cheese caught in his goatee as he goes head to head with celebrated pedal steel guitarist BJ Cole on a new collaborative album project. Hawiian hip hop anyone? Surely you're having a laugh aren't you?

Luke Vibert is undoubtedly one of the figureheads of beat-infested, sampledelic head music. Although little is known about his approach, his aspirations or his background Vibert is hugely respected by followers and fellow artists alike having influenced many with his unorthodox production trickery. In line with West Country compatriots such as the Aphex Twin and Mike Paradinas he believes, rightly, that good music just happens, and there's little need to theorize about it. There's no doubt that mystery is often a powerful ingredient within music. The ability of music to invoke other-worldliness is often enhanced by the enigmatic stature of its creator/s. Take Drexciya, Kraftwerk, even Prince, their mystique has played an important role in instilling legendary status. But as you might expect from Luke's diverse back-catalogue of haphazard beats and experimentation, there is no grand concept hidden behind his music. His material may lack the metaphysical designs of Mills' Axis sleeves, yet by listening attentively to his tracks many ideas and subtleties of more experimental avant-garde artists are soon revealed: rhythms on tin cans, abnormal whining noises, whispers, treated guitars, concrete sounds... A self-professed addict to creating killer beats and rhythms, he once admitted actually being scared to take the beat out for too long. Perhaps this is the ruling guide that allows even his strangest tracks an air of accessibility. So, does he think of himself as a bridge between dance and avant-gardism?

Cole & Vibert - It's not cool to be weird...

"I've never thought about it. I suppose a mini version, but it's not a mission of mine. I'm only ever on a mission just to please myself." His ability to unintentionally span the rocky ravine between the popular and peculiar reflects a production ethos that prevents outside considerations like the music business (and his listeners) from distorting his one passion - making music. For him, music making is an entirely self-satisfying process. Each unorthodox element used in his tracks, be it a gunshot, a whimper or the screams of a mad professor appears for the simple reason that Luke liked it: "I like putting lots of little detail in, even if its really background detail. At the time it's just to amuse me; I'm not thinking 'ah this will make people listen to it longer and get into it for longer', but it does hopefully have that effect." For someone who finds it difficult keeping his own material minimal, his favourite listening pleasures seem much less aurally cumbersome, such as "10 year old hip-hop tracks which have fuck all to them." Perhaps it's this deep understanding of space and subtlety that, despite his penchant for adding detail, prevents his music from ever becoming too claustrophobic. He admits that the sense of anticipation he often evokes by saving the finest track elements until the end of compositions is purely for self-satisfaction. "Sometimes I like to save the very best bit, something I've worked on for ages 'til the very end. It's for the same reason - so that it will entertain me more."

It's only after the tracks are finished he allows any outside considerations to be incorporated. "I'll do loads of stuff - like 20 tracks in 2 weeks or something. After a few you just start thinking 'ah I see the shape of the thing', and then old tracks fit in." For example, Luke's first solo album 'Phat Lab Nightmare' was merely a collection of his scariest tracks rather than a profound attempt to construct a scary album. He works on output continuity once the creative process is over, rather than inter-linking the two. The Aphex Twin works in much the same way, as demonstrated on collections such as 'Selected Ambient Works'. Similarly they've both been known to resort to the opinions of their friends when choosing which tracks to include on a particular project, as often a producer can be too close to their work to know which pieces are most effective or entertaining.

Of course, there are exceptions to Luke's creative preference for solitary studio confinement, as displayed by his latest album 'Stop the Panic' recorded with legendary steel guitarist BJ Cole. "It does depend on what the job is," he admits, "if it's a remix or something, or the stuff with BJ Cole... which is more of a compromise obviously." Not that Luke views this to be an aggressive compromise but more of a two-stage process, as he goes on to explain: "We did loads of stuff just playing around together, jamming up at his place because he hasn't got a computer. We recorded most stuff up there. Then I just took it back here [his place] and did all the anal late night work." The fact that BJ Cole is old enough to be Luke's uncle didn't detract from the vibe which, most importantly, was free. "The only pre-conceived idea I had was the kind of Hawaiian tip, or not so much Hawaiian as exotic because I've got loads of nice exotic stuff with steel [guitar] on it. I just thought oh wicked I can just drench it in loads of reverb and make it *really* exotic." His passion for the exotic was born out of raiding his Mom's prize music collection. "I started off just liking it for sampling, but in the end I thought 'shit hang on, this is wicked in its own right.'" 'Stop the Panic' isn't all Hawaiian shirts however. "After we had done two of them [Hawaiian tracks] I thought we'd done enough of that, and then started to do proper stuff rather than just playing round."

***"I'm only ever on a mission just to please myself."* - Luke Vibert**

As a consequence the album flits between humour and exploration; Hawaii and the Wild West; melancholia and acid groove. "The album is a lot more experimental than my own stuff, less accessible in places and then more accessible in others." So tracks like 'Party Animal' (the fun infested single released last Autumn) comes straight after the eerie emotiveness of 'Watery Glass Planet (part 3)', the only constant being that they both use drum n' bass rhythms. Elsewhere there's

the melancholic saddlery of 'Hipalong Hop' with its tin-can banjo, one of the tracks featuring female singer Ade Brik (heard on last year's 'Female of the Species' compilation). It's the first time Luke has worked with a female vocalist, but as 'Baby Steps' demonstrates, this unlikely union does not equal diva-stapled-to-a-beat predictability. Within the one track the vocal is manipulated into multifarious forms: rhythmic punch holes, soulful laments, child-like ha-has and lyrical snippets all bounce off each other in a bizarre and twisted arrangement. She even sounds like a squealing dog at one point, but it never gets too much. In fact, the overall subtlety on display means that unless you're *really* listening out, you won't notice because it's all dressed in a sugary sweet hip-hop groove. The oriental tinged melancholic acid hip-hop of 'Chewg Phooey' perhaps takes the prize of the writer's favourite. Luke's deep funk acid-groove is the perfect foundation on which BJ Cole's slide guitar becomes a dreamy ride of emotive magic carpet hypnosis.

So by Luke's own admission the BJ Cole project is more experimental. Bearing in mind recent releases like 'Tally Ho!' with its blatant party vibe, does Luke then admit that his solo stuff is becoming increasingly accessible, less idiosyncratic? "Maybe. I've always done those kind of cheesy tunes, I think originally I just wouldn't have released them because I would have been thinking it had got to be more serious, possibly. I didn't really put the humour in until 'Throbbing Pouch' (Rising High, 1994), and even then it was quite minimal really." Your earlier stuff was a lot darker? "Yeah, I think that was more the time. I've always done stuff like that, even now I do lots of dark stuff which I possibly will or won't release depending on what my next thing is. But I've always done bits of everything really, and when it comes to releasing I just pick stuff." So for example..? "Well in the old days I was on the Rising High label and I thought it necessary to be more techno and more serious. It wasn't until Throbbing Pouch that I just started doing what I wanted to do." Of course what Luke wants to do most is make music, "I do it as much as I can, but it's less than I used to by quite a lot." More things to consider? "DJing always draws me away from it. In fact I kind of resent DJing a bit, even though I enjoy it. I find it easy and all that, but it still kind of pisses me off sometimes because I always feel like I should be working." A workaholic then, who even works in his listening time. "A lot of the time, probably 50% of the time, the stuff I'm working on is playing so that I can hear things and change them as I think about it." His workaholic concentration will be somewhat distracted over the next few months however as track making is forced to take a back seat. "We'll [himself and BJ] be touring until Feb or March or something, so I don't want to think about it too much because I can't get anything done, bits and pieces but not a whole project."

So how will the tour work? So will it be BJ on slide and you on the sequencer? "Yeah we've got 3 or 4 tracks which aren't anything to do with the album - just worked out for live stuff. A couple of acid ones with my 303, a couple of funky ones, and then a couple where he'll improvise on top of a DAT so I can prepare for the next live bit." Knowing that in the past Luke took up DJing because he didn't want to play live, this new project provides us with an unprecedented chance to see him mashing the beats up in real time...

Luke Vibert and BJ Cole are playing as a pair across many of the world's countries. Keep your eyes peeled for an exclusive live appearance in your part of the globe. 'Stop the Panic' by Luke Vibert and BJ Cole is out now on Cooking Vinyl.

WORDS>RICHARD WILKES

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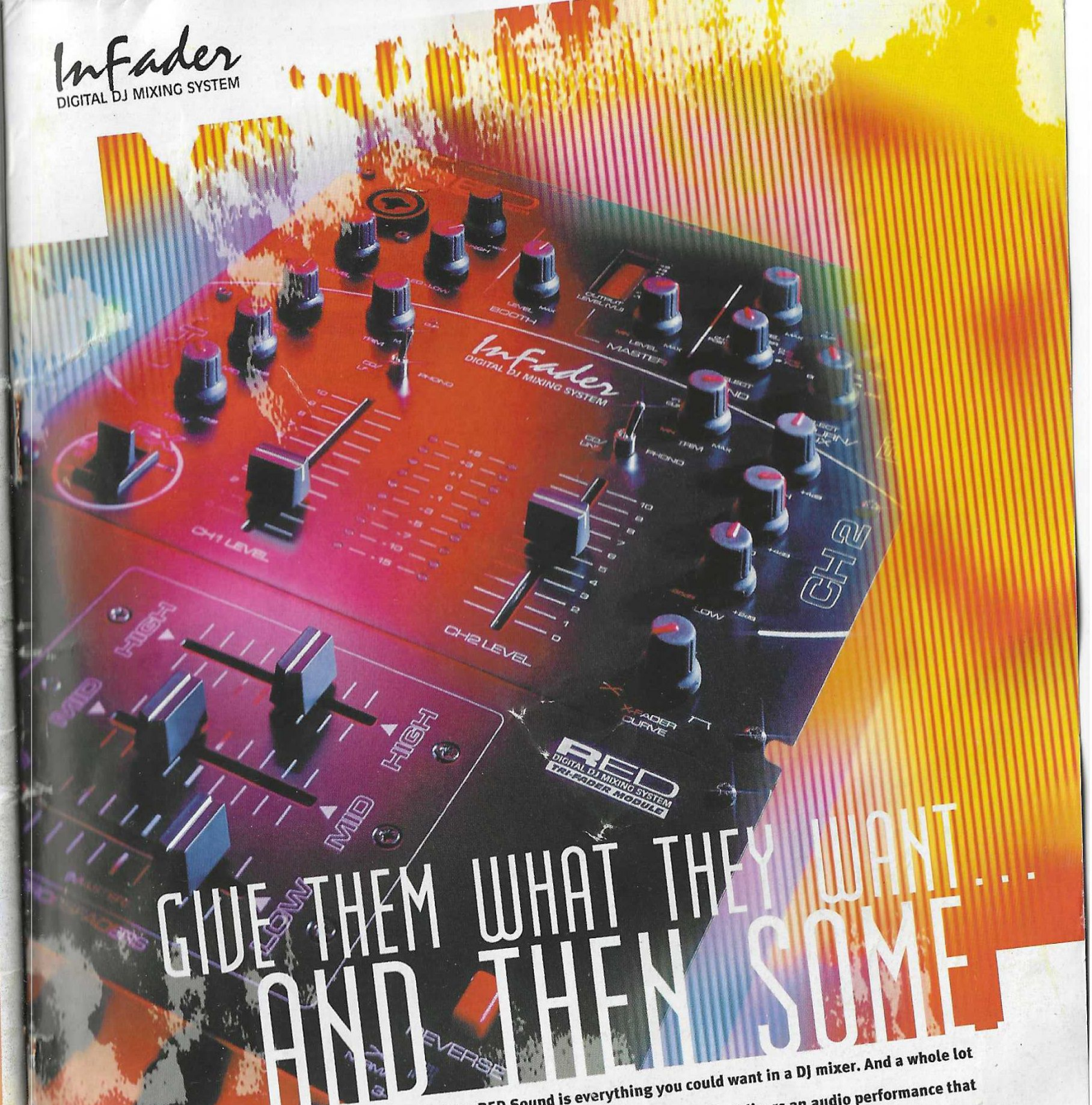

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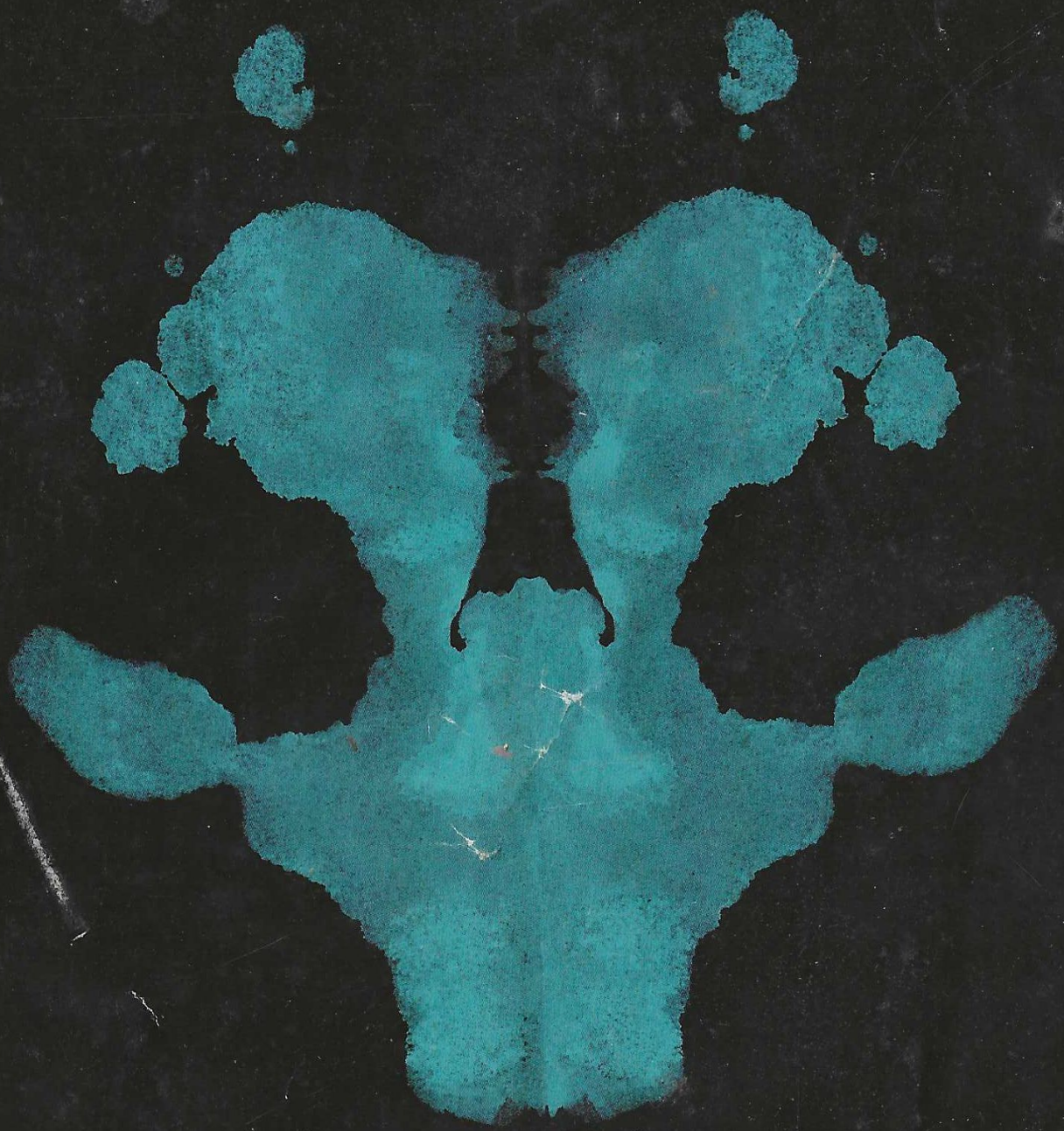

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